



## **SMSU RN to BSN Student Handbook**

**2025-2026**

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*(Please Note: The Student Handbook is subject to changes at any time)*

## **Welcome**

Welcome to the Southwest Minnesota State University (SMSU) RN to BSN Program! This handbook is designed to help guide you through your academic journey and provide important information about program requirements and opportunities.

The RN to BSN Program is designed for registered nurses with a two-year associate degree or a three-year diploma who are seeking to earn a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN).

All courses are offered fully online, with the exception of *NURS 450: Nursing Capstone*. The Capstone includes a 45-hour preceptored learning experience

As a graduate of the program, you will strengthen your leadership, management, and critical thinking skills to support career advancement. You will also be eligible to apply for registration as a Public Health Nurse (PHN) in Minnesota.

## **Accreditation**

The RN to BSN Program at Southwest Minnesota State University (SMSU) at SMSU, located in Marshall, MN, is accredited by the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN).

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(404) 975-5000

The most recent accreditation decision made by the ACEN Board of Commissioners for the RN to BSN Program is initial accreditation.

View the public information disclosed by the ACEN regarding this program on the ACEN website.

## **Admission Requirements:**

1. [Apply for admission to SMSU](#)
2. [RN to BSN Nursing Application Process](#)

## **Additional Admission Requirements:**

- Undergraduate Nursing GPA of 2.30 or greater
- Current, unencumbered RN License (Associate Degree students may apply during their nursing program, with acceptance into the program contingent upon successful completion of the NCLEX-RN exam and nursing licensure.)

**NOTE:** The RN to BSN Program does not require an admission exam, and no additional licensing exam (such as the NCLEX) is required upon graduation.

For additional information, visit our website at

<https://www.smsu.edu/academics/programs/nursingrntobsn/index.html>

We look forward to partnering with you in reaching your educational goals. Please contact the SMSU RN to BSN Program at [NursingDept@SMSU.edu](mailto:NursingDept@SMSU.edu) or 507-537-7591 if you have any further questions.

Dr. Lindsay Pelz, Department Chair

Dr. Tracy Hadler, Director of Nursing (RN-BSN & MSN Programs)

### **Preface**

The SMSU RN to BSN Program is designed for working RNs, allowing flexibility for students to take courses at their own pace.

### **SMSU Mission Statement**

SMSU prepares students to meet the complex challenges of this century as engaged citizens in their local and global communities. Our comprehensive degree programs, taught in the liberal arts tradition, are dedicated to connecting students' academic and practical professional development experiences in southwestern Minnesota to the wider world.

### **SMSU Vision Statement**

SMSU aspires to be recognized throughout Minnesota and beyond for being an inclusive and student-centered university.

### **SMSU Value Statement**

We value:

1. Discovery through innovative teaching, research, and other high-impact experiences.
2. Civic engagement and strategic partnerships.
3. Developing broadly educated and well-rounded leaders.

Southwest Minnesota State University views itself as a community and expects that each community member will become familiar with the standards of the community and assume responsibility for making decisions governing their behavior within this community. The SMSU Student Handbook is intended to provide the student with information about services available at the University and University procedures and should be used as a reference for basic University expectations. Updates, as they occur during the year, will be made to the handbook on the SMSU website. SMSU Student Handbook is available at <http://www.smsu.edu/administration/studenthandbook/>

### **Introduction**

The RN to BSN Program (Bachelor of Science in Nursing) nursing curriculum was designed to provide a broad base of principles from science and liberal arts, including

additional specialized courses in leadership and management, healthcare delivery systems and informatics, community and public health nursing, health promotion, nursing research, and evidence-based practice. Nursing care is based on professional standards, ethics, competencies, and knowledge drawn from the natural, social, medical sciences, and the humanities, as well as nursing's own body of knowledge. Professional nursing supports research and a commitment to lifelong learning to expand nursing knowledge and its use within the profession. To ensure the program's quality and integrity, the RN to BSN Program incorporates the Quality and Safety standards outlined in the Quality and Safety Education in Nursing (QSEN) Core Competencies (QSEN Institute, 2020). The RN students come to the program with real-world experiences and pre-existing abilities that are a foundation for their learning in and out of the classroom. The BSN graduate embraces the nursing profession as a nurse generalist with a strong foundation for developing specialized experiential (clinical) practice and other advanced practice roles. The BSN graduate is prepared to function effectively in ambiguous, unpredictable, and complex environments; demonstrate critical thinking and flexibility; and translate, integrate, and apply knowledge to enhance patient care quality and safety.

### **SMSU RN to BSN Program Mission**

The mission of the RN to BSN Program is to provide leadership in nursing education, scholarship, and practice that reflects cultural, ethical, and compassionate presence in the preparation of nurses that will serve with excellence in a diverse and ever-changing society. The RN to BSN Program adheres to and supports the mission and values of SMSU.

### **End of Program Student Learning Outcomes (EOPSLOs):**

**EOPSLO #1:** Build the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of the baccalaureate prepared nurse as described within the Scope & Standards of Practice and Nursing Code of Ethics. (**Courses:** NURS300, NURS450)

**EOPSLO#2** Value diversity when planning equitable and inclusive person-centered care. (**Courses:** NURS310, NURS450)

**EOPSLO #3:** Support person centered care through inter- and intra-professional collaborative processes. (**Courses:** NURS410, NURS440, NURS450)

**EOPSLO #4:** Examine evidence to optimize health, safety, and quality outcomes. (**Courses:** NURS360, NURS390, NURS434, NURS435, NURS450)

**EOPSLO #5:** Evaluate informatics and technology to support optimal health outcomes. (**Courses:** NURS420, NURS450)

**EOPSLO#6:** Value social determinants of health in the nursing process application to provide person-centered care.

**(Courses:** NURS320, NURS400, NURS437, NURS450)

### **Code of Ethics for Nurses**

The Department of Nursing faculty subscribes to the American Nurses Association (ANA) Code of Ethics for Nurses (2015). Students are expected to learn and perform in accordance with this code.

### **Course Descriptions**

#### **NURS 300 Transitions to Baccalaureate Nursing (3 cr)**

This course serves to assist the registered nurse in the transition to baccalaureate nursing practice. Growth as a BSN-prepared nurse surfaces through topics that will be examined surrounding professional nursing practice, Nursing Standards of Practice, ethical comportment, advocacy, evidence-based practice with statistical literacy, and nursing competencies. Admission to the RN to BSN Program required. The Department of Nursing reserves the right to remove students from the course who do not meet the course requirements and prerequisites. This course is the first NURS course taken in the SMSU RN to BSN Program. It may be taken alone or in conjunction with other NURS courses. This course must be successfully completed prior to taking further NURS courses in future semesters.

#### **NURS 310 Transcultural Nursing (3 cr)**

This course builds on previously acquired nursing knowledge, skills, and attitudes to holistically assess and plan care for culturally diverse individuals, families, and groups. Students examine the use of Transcultural Nursing frameworks to guide the nursing process. Pre-requisite: Admission to the RN to BSN Program. The Department of Nursing reserves the right to remove students from the course who do not meet the course requirements and prerequisites.

#### **NURS 320 Chronic Illness in Rural Settings (3 cr)**

Students will explore factors that impact the individual, family, community, and health care systems in a rural setting. Chronic illness, end-of-life care, ethical issues, person-centered care, as well as social determinants of health are explored. Admission to the RN to BSN Program is required. Pre-requisite: The Department of Nursing reserves the right to remove students from the course who do not meet the course requirements and prerequisites. This course must be successfully completed prior to taking NURS 434.

**NURS 360 Pathophysiology (3 cr)**

This course will explore patterns of illness and wellness in the individual. Concepts related to pathophysiology will be explored. Health promotion and disease prevention are highlighted. The impact of genomics, lifestyle, and social determinants of health are addressed. Content in this course builds upon previous knowledge of natural sciences. Pre-requisite: Admission to the RN to BSN Program required. The Department of Nursing reserves the right to remove students from the course who do not meet the course requirements and prerequisites.

**NURS 390 Evidence-Based Practice (3 cr)**

This course introduces students to scientific inquiry in the discipline of nursing. Students study the basic foundation of the nursing research process. The overview includes the steps in the research process, research designs, research methodology, data collection, analysis, ethical conduct related to human research, lifelong learning, and evidence-based practice in nursing. The emphasis is placed on developing students as effective consumers of research. Pre-requisite: Admission to the RN to BSN Program. The Department of Nursing reserves the right to remove students from the course who do not meet the course requirements and prerequisites. This course must be successfully completed prior to taking NURS 435 or NURS 437.

**NURS 400 Prevention and Population Health (3 cr)**

This course focuses on nursing leadership and management concepts in the contemporary healthcare environment. Students will engage in the exploration and discovery of challenges facing the emerging nurse leader. Leadership skills will be developed leading to the creation of initiatives to provide safe, quality care that impact communities or healthcare organizations. Pre-requisite: Admission to the RN to BSN Program. The Department of Nursing reserves the right to remove students from the course who do not meet the course requirements and prerequisites.

**NURS 410 Public/Community Health Experiential Nursing Learning Seminar (1 cr)**

Students will work with the course faculty to determine public/community health experiential nursing learning experiences. Students will collaborate with community partners and health agencies to assess populations, develop health promotion projects, provide health education, and assist vulnerable populations within communities to maintain optimal health. Pre-requisite: Admission to the RN to BSN Program is required. The Department of Nursing reserves the right to remove students from the course who do not meet the course requirements and prerequisites. This course must be successfully completed prior to taking NURS 450.

**NURS 420 Healthcare Policy and Informatics (3 cr)**

Students in this course analyze the historical and current factors that impact healthcare systems and population health. Students examine healthcare policies and information technology (informatics) as they influence the nature and function of nursing practice related to safe, person-centered care, and self-care. Students examine the connection between interprofessional collaboration, healthcare policy, and informatics. Pre-requisite: Admission to the RN to BSN program. The Department of Nursing reserves the right to remove students from the course who do not meet the course requirements and prerequisites.

**NURS 440 Organizational and Systems Leadership (3 cr)**

Students in this course focus on nursing leadership and management concepts in the contemporary healthcare environment. Students will engage in the exploration and discovery of challenges facing the emerging nurse leader. Students develop leadership skills related to providing safe, quality care for communities and healthcare organizations. Pre-requisite: Admission to the RN to BSN Program. The Department of Nursing reserves the right to remove students from the course who do not meet the course requirements and prerequisites.

**NURS 450 Nursing Capstone (3 cr)** This final capstone course will provide the RN to BSN nursing student with a public/community health practicum experience reflective of a synthesis of cognitive, psychomotor, and affective skills acquired throughout the nursing program. This capstone course allows students to integrate experiential learning with a focus on population health nursing. Students will also integrate nursing leadership skills, healthcare policy, and quality improvement knowledge and apply population-based care to design a clinically focused project to improve client outcomes. Students will further apply and evaluate the social determinants of health in developing their capstone project utilizing evidence-based resources, address public health competencies, and analyze how the identified issue and interventions influence the health of an affected population. Pre-requisite: Admission to the RN to BSN Program. Completion of NURS 400 and NURS 410. The Department of Nursing reserves the right to remove students who do not meet the course requirements and prerequisites from the course. Students will take this course in the final semester of the RN to BSN program.

**Nursing Elective: NURS 434 Care of the Rural Population (2 cr)**

This course provides an advanced analysis of rural health care disparities, disparities of health for the rural population, along with strategies to care for the rural population. Areas of emphasis will include unique demographics of the rural population, nursing theories applied to vulnerable populations, recruitment and retention issues for rural

healthcare, and challenges facing rural hospitals. Pre-requisite: NURS 320 Chronic Illness in Rural Settings and Admission to the RN to BSN Program required. The Department of Nursing reserves the right to remove students from the course who do not meet the course requirements and prerequisites.

### **Nursing Elective: NURS 435 Clinical Reasoning and Judgment (2 cr)**

This course assists the registered nurse in enhancing and improving critical thinking, clinical judgment, and clinical reasoning skills. Emphasis is the application of clinical reasoning skills to a quality improvement project. The nurse uses interprofessional collaboration to promote change and improve health outcomes. Pre-requisite: Admission to the RN to BSN Program and NURS 390 or 430 Evidence-Based Practice. The Department of Nursing reserves the right to remove students from the course who do not meet the course requirements and prerequisites.

### **Nursing Elective: NURS 437 Mental Health Nursing (2 cr)**

This course focuses on an introduction to theories and concepts of behavioral health nursing, psychopathy, and treatment modalities related to the nursing care of clients and their families. This course is designed to provide the learner with basic knowledge and a skill set that will enable them to function in the clinical environment as they provide, manage, and coordinate care when working with clients and families experiencing disturbances in mental health. Admission to the Nursing Program required. Prerequisite: NURS 390.

### **[RN to BSN Program of Study](#)**

*Click on the hyperlink to access the Program of Study for part-time or full-time examples.*

### **Application Deadlines**

- Applications for the RN to BSN Program are accepted for both the fall and spring semesters.
- Applications are reviewed in the order they are received, once all admission requirements have been met.
- Completed applications remain valid for two years from the date of submission.

### ***Additional Information:***

- Students who have been admitted to SMSU, but not yet to the RN to BSN Program, may take non-nursing courses while their nursing application is in process.
- Admission is limited to students who:
  - Reside in states where SMSU is authorized to grant degrees, and
  - Meet state board of nursing requirements for experiential (clinical) learning.

### **Notification of Admission Decision**

Applicants are notified of their admission status once all acceptance requirements have been met. Admission decisions are made on a rolling basis as requirements are completed.

Students will receive one of the following notifications, sent by both email and U.S. mail:

- Acceptance
- Provisional Acceptance
- Non-Acceptance

### **Provisional Acceptance**

Students who do not meet the minimum required **nursing** GPA of 2.30 may request provisional acceptance into the RN to BSN Program through an appeal process.

#### **Appeal Process:**

- Submit a **written appeal** to the RN to BSN Program Director before applying to the program.
- Your appeal letter should include:
  - The reason for your appeal request
  - An explanation of the circumstances that contributed to a GPA below 2.30
  - Your goals for completing the RN to BSN Program
  - A plan for academic success in the program

#### **Review Process:**

The appeal will be reviewed by the Nursing Admissions Committee, which may include:

- Department of Nursing Chair
- RN to BSN Program Director
- Registrar's representative (as needed)
- Student advisor or faculty member

### **Grading & Academic Standing Policy**

All grade point averages (GPAs) are managed by the Registrar's Office and are calculated to the second decimal place (truncated, not rounded). The following marks are not included in GPA calculation: I, IP, AU, NA, W, CR, and NC. The GPA recorded by the Registrar is the official GPA used for RN to BSN program decisions.

#### **Grading Scale**

- A: 90–100%
- B: 80–89.99%
- C: 70–79.99%
- D: 60–69.99%
- F: Below 60%

## **Program Requirements**

- Students must maintain a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.0.
- A grade of “C” (2.0 / 70%) or higher is required in all nursing (NURS) courses.
- Any nursing course may be repeated once to achieve a passing grade. Students may not retake or withdraw from more than two nursing courses during the program.
- Nursing students must complete the RN to BSN Program within seven years from the first term the student enrolls in the RN to BSN Program.

A student may not continue in the RN to BSN Program under any of the following circumstances:

- The student has withdrawn from or failed more than two nursing (NURS) courses.
- The student does not maintain:
  - An unencumbered RN license,
  - A successful Minnesota Department of Human Services background study,
  - Current HIPAA training certification, or
  - An up-to-date health form prior to enrollment in the capstone course (NURS 450).
- The student is removed from the NURS 450 practicum (clinical experience) due to a safety concern or involvement in a criminal matter.
- The student does not enroll in any courses (NURS or general education) during the fall or spring semester without an approved Study Leave.
- The student fails to comply with policies outlined in the current edition of the RN to BSN Student Handbook and/or the SMSU Student Handbook.

## **Study Leave Request**

- The purpose of the Study Leave Request is to allow the nursing student to remain in the RN to BSN Program while not enrolled in courses relevant to the BSN degree.
- Students enrolled in the RN to BSN Program may request a Study Leave Request for the spring or fall semester (no study leave is required for the summer semester).
- For a Study Leave Request to be granted, the student must complete the Study Leave Request Form and have a study leave request advising session with their advisor to discuss future plans.
- During a Study Leave, the student is responsible for *having at least one* general advising session with their advisor to plan for the upcoming semester.
- A student may only request one semester of Study Leave Request at a time.

- Throughout the RN to BSN Program, a student may request a maximum of two individual semesters of Study Leave Requests total, which may be concurrent. This will require the completion of two separate Study Leave Requests.
- If the Study Leave Request process is not completed at the beginning of a semester, and the student is no longer enrolled in RN to BSN Program coursework, the student will be considered withdrawn from the RN to BSN Program (no longer progressing in the RN to BSN Program).
- The RN to BSN Program will automatically withdraw the student from future NURS courses if the student is no longer progressing in the RN to BSN Program by not taking any courses (excluding the summer semester) and not requesting Study Leave.

### **Readmission**

Students who are no longer eligible to progress in the RN to BSN Program may request readmission by submitting a formal letter of appeal to the Director of Nursing. The letter must include the following:

#### **Plan for Success**

- A summary of a meeting with the student's faculty advisor to develop a strategy for future academic success.
- An explanation of the circumstances that led to the student's non-progression (e.g., personal or family matters, low GPA, bereavement, etc.).

#### **Academic History**

- A list of the course(s) in which the student did not meet the required grade criteria, including the grades earned.

#### **Future Goals**

- A clear description of how the student plans to achieve success if readmitted to the program.
- The Nursing Admission Committee will review the appeal. The full-time nursing faculty will also review the appeal. The Director of Nursing will then notify the student in writing of the committee's decision. If readmission is approved, the letter will outline any conditions or stipulations for re-entry (e.g., medical clearance, updated documentation).

#### **To be eligible for readmission, the student must:**

- Submit a new RN to BSN Program application.
- Hold a current, unencumbered RN license.
- Ensure all nursing (NURS) courses are completed within seven years of the first term of enrollment.
- Courses completed more than seven years prior to graduation must be repeated to meet degree requirements.

### **Individual Requirements and Support Systems for Students**

The professional nurse performs many tasks as part of their practice. Training for this type of work requires the student to perform these same tasks and demonstrate certain characteristics. The following is a list of tasks/characteristics that may need to be performed/demonstrated as part of the training to become a professional nurse. This is not an all-inclusive list; it is a collection of examples of what might be encountered throughout the program.

- *Gross motor* - walking, stooping, bending, pulling, pushing (significant strength, endurance, and balance are required for many of these tasks)
- *Fine motor* - writing (English), pinching, injections, keyboarding
- Sensory/perceptual - hot/cold, sight (acuity, color), smell, hearing (high/low pitch/volume)
- *Emotional* – stability, sensitivity, caring.
- *Moral* - reliable, honest

### **Health Requirements**

After admission to the RN to BSN Program, students must submit required health documents during *NURS 410 (Public/Community Health Clinical Experience Seminar)* and keep them current through the *NURS 450 (Nursing Capstone)* course.

- All health documents must be on file and up to date before beginning NURS 450.
  - Students who do not meet health requirements will not be permitted to enroll in or continue the Capstone course.
  - Missing or delayed health documentation may result in missed clinical hours, which can affect progression in the program.
1. Provide a demonstration of personal health consistent with a safe nursing practice determined by a Department of Nursing *Health Information Form*.
  2. Provide applicable immunizations or a declination waiver for any required immunizations that you opt out of, as/if applicable.
  3. Follow the immunizations/clinical requirements required by the public/community health facility/agency. Depending upon the public/community health facility/agency experiential (clinical) experiences selected, students may need to complete additional health compliance requirements, including immunizations.
  4. Students *may* be asked to provide TB testing documentation per the clinical facility/agency.
  5. Required immunizations/titers that must be current include MMR (Measles, Mumps, Rubella).
  6. Hepatitis B series is strongly encouraged and/or titer.
  7. Students are encouraged to always keep original documents of the Health History Form and immunization documentation as federal law prohibits SMSU from providing a copy of the documents to a student or healthcare agency/facility.
  8. Any significant change in health while actively taking nursing courses must be immediately communicated to the NURS 450 faculty member or faculty advisor. The faculty member or advisor will then work with the Director of Nursing to determine an appropriate course of action, such as clearance from a medical

provider. If documentation of the Health Information form is needed at the clinical facility/agency site, it will be the student's role to share medical clearance with the course faculty, Director of Nursing, and the site.

**Measles, Mumps, & Rubella (MMR) (*required*):**

- Dates of **two** doses of MMR immunizations (which must be after 12 months of age); **OR**
- An antibody blood titer documenting immunity of measles, immunity of mumps, and immunity of rubella.
- If the document is a printed vaccination or titer record from a healthcare facility, then a signature is not required. However, if the vaccine or titer information is handwritten or is not a printed document from a healthcare facility, then it **MUST** be signed by a medical provider. Electronic signatures and stamps from the healthcare facility are also acceptable forms of signatures. State Immunization Registry reports are accepted.

**Hepatitis B Immunization (*strongly encouraged*):**

- Series of three doses of Hepatitis B Immunization. At minimum, this series must be started before acceptance into the Program **OR**
- An antibody blood titer documenting immunity of Hepatitis B.
- If the document is a printed vaccination or titer record from a healthcare facility, then a signature is not required. However, if the vaccine or titer information is handwritten or is not a printed document from a healthcare facility, then it **MUST** be signed by a medical provider. Electronic signatures and stamps from the healthcare facility are also acceptable forms of signatures. State Immunization Registry reports are accepted.

**TB Testing (*students may be asked to provide documentation (per the clinical facility/agency requirements)*)**

- a. A negative two step TB skin test (TST) consists of two separate negative tuberculin skin tests. The two-step TST involves placement of a purified protein derivative (PPD) to test for tuberculosis. The first reading must be read by a healthcare professional within 48 – 72 hours after placement, and the area of induration must be recorded. The second TST should be administered one to two weeks after the first test. TST must be done within the past 12 months.
- b. Submission of two previous negative TSTs within 13 months of each other, with the last TST in the past 12 months.
- c. One Interferon-Gamma Release Assay (IGRA) test, which includes QuantiFERON TB Gold (QFT-G), QuantiFERON Gold in tube test (GFT-GIT) or T-Spot for TB (T-Spot) along with any required follow-up, done within the past 12 months.
- d. Students who are positive reactors to a TST must have a report of one negative chest x-ray on file and the SMSU TST Reactor Form signed by a health care provider, assuring the absence of symptoms. Once a student has provided documentation of a negative chest x-ray taken after a positive TST, they will need not repeat it if they are symptom-free.

- e. Bacille Callmette-Gurerin (BCG) vaccinated individuals who test positive by TST and negative by IGRA are not required to have a follow-up x-ray.

### **Refusal to Obtain Immunizations or Titers**

If the student is unable to comply with any or all requirements, or if the student has contraindication(s) to a required immunization, the student must:

1. Sign an Immunization Medical Exemption Acknowledgment form (from your clinical/provider) indicating the specific immunization(s) or titers or tests that are being voluntarily refused and the rationale for the refusal and/or secure a letter from their physician indicating the medical reason for not obtaining the required immunizations(s).
2. Students need to understand that SMSU will not be responsible for immunization medical exemptions or any related outcomes. SMSU will work with the student to secure alternative experiential (clinical) experiences. Experiential experiences may not be available to the student without proper immunizations and as a result the student may not be allowed to complete the required experiential experiences necessary to graduate.
3. Please be aware that some experiential learning (clinical) experiences/sites require additional immunizations, drug screens, background/criminal studies, and documentation to participate in the experiential experience. If a student cannot complete immunizations, this information must be communicated to their NURS 410/NURS 450 faculty member. The NURS 410/NURS 450 faculty member may communicate this to the experiential location before the student initiates hours.

Students are encouraged to maintain current health insurance as the student is responsible for any injuries they may incur while studying at SMSU or with a community agency. Southwest Minnesota State University and clinical agencies are not responsible for injuries incurred as part of any type of nursing-related learning experience. The student is responsible for meeting all their health care needs related to any issues or health concerns that arise.

### **Professional Requirements**

1. **RN License**  
Students must maintain a current, active, and unencumbered RN license. Licensure will be verified before enrollment in *NURS 450: Nursing Capstone*.
2. **Background Study**  
A Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) Background Study is required prior to *NURS 450: Nursing Capstone*.
  - Students are responsible for the DHS background study fee.
  - Minnesota law requires background studies for anyone providing direct patient/client care in DHS-approved facilities.
  - Instructions for completing the background study will be provided in *NURS 410 (Public/Community Health Clinical Experience Seminar)*.

- Students convicted of certain crimes may be restricted from clinical placements and, therefore, unable to complete program requirements.
  - Questions should be directed to the DHS Background Study Unit (651-431-6620).
  - Students should keep their own documentation of background studies, as SMSU is not permitted to provide copies. Some agencies may also require additional background checks.
3. **HIPAA Training**  
Students must complete DHS HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act) training before beginning *NURS 450: Nursing Capstone*.
4. **Liability Insurance**  
Student nurse liability insurance is provided by SMSU. Coverage applies only when students are functioning in their role as SMSU nursing students.

**Providing Healthcare Services** - It is unlawful for anyone who is not a licensed healthcare professional to provide healthcare to others. Nursing students may not provide nursing care to any person unless that activity/task was appropriately delegated to them by a designated licensed preceptor. For example, a nursing student may not practice nursing procedures on others unless directed to do so by their designated licensed preceptor.

**Substance Abuse or Impairment** - Students may not participate in experiential learning activities or experiences, classroom, lab, etc. while under the influence of any substance that may impair judgment or result in disruptive or disorderly behavior. Any student using substances (including prescription medication) needs to communicate this to their course faculty member. Discovery of prior history of substance abuse or impairment requires that the student's background and situation be reviewed by the RN to BSN Program prior to acceptance or progression in the RN to BSN Program.

## **Resource Requirements**

### **Books/Supplies**

Students are responsible for obtaining their own textbooks and supplies. Instructors or faculty advisors can provide guidance regarding which Open Education Resources (OER's) or textbooks to use to create a cost-effective plan for the student.

### **Transportation**

All students are responsible for meeting their own transportation needs for clinical learning experiences.

### **Uniform/Appearance**

Students must maintain a neat, clean uniform in the style designated by the RN to BSN Program and clinical agencies and facilities. When students are in clinical settings, the uniform will be professional pants (black, brown, or khaki) with a plain white, brown, or black professional shirt, and an SMSU RN to BSN nursing student nametag (*students are responsible for the cost of the nametag through the NURS 410 course fee*) unless

agencies/facilities mandate otherwise. When street clothes are allowed, the student must wear professional dress that is modest, neat, and clean. Students must meet the clinical agency and facility policy. The course instructor can remove any student from experiential experiences they feel are not professional in appearance and presentation.

**The following may be prohibited at clinical sites:**

- Tobacco or body odor
- Dirty clothing
- Visible tattoos
- More than one pair of earrings; earrings other than simple posts
- Any visible piercing other than one eyebrow and two ears (no tongue piercings)
- Rings with raised stones
- Necklaces hanging more than 6" when leaning forward
- Hair falling more than 3" over the face when leaning forward
- Nails extending past fingertips; artificial nails of any kind
- Perfume or strong scents
- Open-toed shoes
- Blue jeans, shorts, mini-skirts
- Halter tops, tank tops, low-cut tops, or exposed abdomen/undergarments
- T-shirts with writing (except SMSU logo)
- Any item restricted by instructor or agency policy

Student concerns following the above prohibitive list should contact the NURS 410/450 instructor.

**Bloodborne Pathogens Policy:**

Students are responsible for immediately reporting all sharps injuries and suspected exposures to bloodborne pathogens and/or other potentially infectious materials during their experiential experiences to their preceptor, and subsequently to their course instructor. The student will be assessed and treated following the experiential agency or facility policy. Health care costs for injuries or illnesses sustained or contracted during experiential learning experiences are not covered by SMSU or the facility or agency; such costs are the student's responsibility.

**Chemical Use and/or Abuse Policy:**

Students are expected to attend clinical learning experiences free from the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs. If a student is taking medically authorized drugs or other substances, during their experiential experience, that may alter clinical judgment or performance, it is the student's responsibility to notify the course instructor of this information prior to the experiential experience. If during any experiential experiences, reasonable suspicion arises surrounding a student's use or abuse of alcohol or illegal drugs, the RN to BSN student should be assessed and treated following the facility or agency policy. The agency or facility will contact the course instructor and inform them of the situation. If the assessment verifies alcohol or illegal drug use, the student will no longer be eligible to continue the experiential experience. Future course plan actions for

the student will be determined by the RN to BSN Program and state regulations for reporting of chemical use and abuse for nursing practice will be followed. The cost of assessment and treatment for suspected alcohol or illegal drug use is not covered by the University or the agency/facility; such costs are the student's responsibility.

### **Writing Assignments**

The most recent edition of the American Psychological Association (APA) *Publication Manual* will be used as the style guide for all written assignments in the RN to BSN Program.

### **Assignment Usage Disclaimer**

All assignments and written work submitted by students are subject to being shared with others to meet accreditation and regulatory requirements. Course material may also be used anonymously for assessment of course student learning outcomes (CSLOs) and End of Program Student Learning Outcomes (EOPSLOs) addressed by the RN to BSN Program and assessment of the SMSU Liberal Education Program (LEP) SLOs. When student assignments are shared, the student's identity will be protected. Course artifacts may also be used for campus wide LEP or program assessment.

### **Attendance Policies**

Attendance policies may vary between courses, experiential learning experiences, and instructors. The general attendance policy is as follows.

- Tardiness to experiential experiences may result in dismissal from the program.
- Unexcused absence from experiential experiences may result in dismissal from the program.

### **Photos, Audio, and Videos**

Images and audio of clients may never be used by students without written permission from the client and the Department Chair and RN to BSN Director.

### **Mobile/Cellular Communication Usage**

Students should follow all agency/facility policies related to mobile communication device usage. Students may not use any portable electronic device in the presence of a patient/client.

If an emergency arises, the student should leave the learning area to take the call. This includes text messaging, email, and instant messaging.

### **Precepted Learning & Coursework**

When a patient/client is receiving nursing-related care, they have a right to the same level of quality care regardless of student interaction. This includes anyone the student interacts with as an SMSU RN to BSN nursing student. Therefore, the student is responsible for being fully prepared for every precepted experience and interaction. The student also has the responsibility to communicate relevant information to the course instructor and nurse caring for the client. The client has the right to request that students not provide their care at any time without question.

A student that is determined to be unprepared for a precepted learning experience or who fails to communicate pertinent information that places the client's safety at risk will be designated as "unsatisfactory" for that day. If the student receives feedback that results in two "unsatisfactory" days within an experiential experience, the student will be removed from the experience and will fail the course.

Students are fully responsible for understanding and abiding by all agency and facility policies, all SMSU policies, and all course-related policies. Not knowing about a policy is never an acceptable reason for lack of compliance and will result in removal from the practicum experience and failure of the course.

All course instructors, preceptors, and agency/facility staff have the right to remove any student from interactions with clients due to suspicion of the use of any substance (to include prescription medication) that may impair judgment or result in disruptive or disorderly behavior. Any such situation will be referred to the Department of Nursing Chair/RN to BSN Program Director for further review before the student may continue patient/client and experiential interactions.

Students participating in the NURS 450 course are encouraged to determine what steps are needed to ensure personal safety. This includes letting friends/faculty know when and where experiential activity will be taking place. Students are encouraged to contact new agencies and facilities well in advance to find approved parking. Students should never provide personal information to a client unless absolutely indicated by the experiential activities. It is the student's responsibility to obey all agency policies regarding interactions with clients. Students may not be compensated for any time in which they are earning academic credit without prior consent of the Department of Nursing Chair/Director of Nursing. For instance, a student may not 'punch in' while acting as a student nurse.

Clinical agencies, facilities, and SMSU are not responsible for injuries incurred as a part of any type of nursing-related learning experience. The student is responsible for meeting all their health care needs related to any issues or health concerns that arise. Should injury or exposure to a potential pathogen occur, the student is required to report the incident to their preceptor, instructor, and Department of Nursing Chair/Director of Nursing and follow the policy at the agency they are placed in.

### **Clinical Course Evaluation**

- In NURS 450 (Nursing Capstone), the student's practicum experience will be evaluated on a pass/fail basis by the course faculty.
- The designated preceptor will provide feedback to the student/course faculty based on observations in the experiential setting and course outcome criteria.
- Final feedback will be provided using the Preceptor Feedback of Student Performance form.
- If the student does not pass the preceptored learning experience portion of NURS 450, the student will receive an *F* in NURS 450.

| <b><u>Additional SMSU Resources Available to Nursing Students</u></b>  |  |
|--|--|
| SMSU Support Services<br><i>General academic and student resources</i>   | <a href="https://www.smsu.edu/administration/academic-deans/resources.html">https://www.smsu.edu/administration/academic-deans/resources.html</a>  |
| Deeann Griebel Student Success Center (DGSSC)<br><i>Supports academic, social, and professional success. Includes Early Alert, SAP meetings, advising support, and exit procedure.</i> | <a href="https://www.smsu.edu/campuslife/dgssc/index.html">https://www.smsu.edu/campuslife/dgssc/index.html</a> .  |
| Tutoring Support (Tutor.com)<br><i>24/7 online tutoring (15 free hours/year). Access through D2L.</i>  | <a href="https://www.smsu.edu/campuslife/dgssc/what-is-tutor.html">https://www.smsu.edu/campuslife/dgssc/what-is-tutor.html</a>  |
| Career Services<br><i>Career development resources and job search support.</i>   | <a href="https://www.smsu.edu/campuslife/careerservices/index.html">https://www.smsu.edu/campuslife/careerservices/index.html</a>  |
| Mental Health Counseling Center<br><i>Free confidential counseling; includes Mantra Health for 24/7 crisis and wellness support.</i>   | <a href="https://www.smsu.edu/campuslife/mentalhealthcounselingcenter/index.html">https://www.smsu.edu/campuslife/mentalhealthcounselingcenter/index.html</a><br><br><a href="https://www.smsu.edu/campuslife/mentalhealthcounselingcenter/mantra-health.html">https://www.smsu.edu/campuslife/mentalhealthcounselingcenter/mantra-health.html</a> |
| Accessibility Services<br><i>Support and accommodations for students with documented disabilities.</i>   | <a href="https://www.smsu.edu/accessibility/index.html">https://www.smsu.edu/accessibility/index.html</a>  |
| Financial Aid<br><i>Federal, state, and institutional aid (grants, scholarships, loans, work-study).</i>   | <a href="https://www.smsu.edu/campuslife/financialaid/index.html">https://www.smsu.edu/campuslife/financialaid/index.html</a>  |
| Student Health Services<br><i>Free and confidential health services, including medical evaluations and referrals.</i>  | <a href="https://www.smsu.edu/campuslife/healthservices/index.html">https://www.smsu.edu/campuslife/healthservices/index.html</a>  |
| Information Technology Services<br><i>Tech support (logins, email, D2L, wireless, devices). Open 7 days a week during the semester.</i>  | <a href="https://www.smsu.edu/informationtechnologyservices/index.html">https://www.smsu.edu/informationtechnologyservices/index.html</a>  |
| Writing Center<br><i>Tutoring for writing skills, citations, and organization.</i>   | <a href="https://www.smsu.edu/campuslife/writingcenter/index.html">https://www.smsu.edu/campuslife/writingcenter/index.html</a>  |

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Office of Online Learning & Transfer Partnerships<br><i>Orientation and support for online learners.</i> | <a href="https://www.smsu.edu/academics/onlinelearning/index.html">https://www.smsu.edu/academics/onlinelearning/index.html</a>   |
| LGBTQ+ Center<br><i>Safe space training, anti-violence education, workshops, and referrals.</i>          | <a href="https://www.smsu.edu/campuslife/lgbtqcenter/index.html">https://www.smsu.edu/campuslife/lgbtqcenter/index.html</a>   |
| Veterans Resources<br><i>Support for veterans, military members, and their families.</i>                 | <a href="https://www.smsu.edu/campuslife/veterans/index.html">https://www.smsu.edu/campuslife/veterans/index.html</a>   |
| Office of Diversity and Inclusion<br><i>Promotes a diverse, inclusive educational experience.</i>        | <a href="https://www.smsu.edu/administration/diversityinclusion/index.html">https://www.smsu.edu/administration/diversityinclusion/index.html</a>   |
| Mustang Market<br><i>Mustang Market is SMSU's permanent food and resource pantry</i>                     | <a href="https://www.smsu.edu/campuslife/mustangmarket/index.html">https://www.smsu.edu/campuslife/mustangmarket/index.html</a>   |
| Basic Needs & United Way 211<br><i>Connects students to local and statewide basic needs resources.</i>   | <a href="https://www.smsu.edu/administration/deanofstudents/supporting-student-basic-needs.html">https://www.smsu.edu/administration/deanofstudents/supporting-student-basic-needs.html</a> |

## **SMSU Administrative Policies**

### **Governance**

Student representatives serve as a link between nursing students and the RN to BSN Program. Their role includes sharing student and peer suggestions for program improvement (e.g., plan of study, handbook policies, experiential learning, or scheduling). Student representatives also communicate relevant information from RN to BSN Program meetings back to the student body. In addition, all nursing students contribute to departmental governance by providing feedback through evaluations and surveys.

### **Communication**

- Email: Official communication will be sent through your SMSU email account. To be successful, you should check your SMSU email regularly during the semester. Instructors will use SMSU email (not personal accounts) for course communication.
- Course Guidance: Each nursing course will provide specific instructions on how to communicate with your instructor.
- Professionalism: Effective communication is an important part of professionalism. When you have questions or concerns, always begin by contacting your course instructor and following the appropriate channels.

### **Formal Complaints**

#### Course Concerns

Students should address course-related concerns directly with the instructor. Student representatives are not to be used for discussing individual course learning

opportunities. Professional communication between students and instructors is expected.

#### Academic Appeals

Students who wish to appeal a grade must first meet with the faculty member who awarded the grade. If the issue is not resolved, the student may submit an appeal to the Academic Appeal Committee. The complete Academic Appeals policy is available in the SMSU Student Handbook.

#### Student Grievances/Complaints

Students have the right to seek remedies for disputes or disagreements, including:

Issues of institutional or program quality (e.g., compliance with accrediting standards).

Concerns related to consumer fraud or deceptive trade practices.

Note: This process does not apply to academic grade disputes.

The complete Student Grievance/Complaint policy is available in the SMSU Student Handbook.

#### **Satisfactory Academic Progress**

The intent of the SMSU Policy on Satisfactory Academic Progress is to make students aware when they are not making satisfactory academic progress. The nursing student also needs to meet the RN to BSN Program Progression Policy. The student may be presented with a Striving for Success Plan after evaluation of the circumstances that lead to academic difficulty or low performance. The Striving for Success Plan may be presented to the student by the course instructor and shared with the Director of Nursing. This plan will include strategies that may help the student to improve academic performance and is created to guide the student to success.

The student is encouraged to take advantage of all the resources that exist for them at SMSU. Failure to meet the standards identified in the Striving for Success Plan may delay progression in the RN to BSN Program or dismissal from the RN to BSN Program. The Striving for Success Plan is not a part of the student's permanent academic record.

#### **Handbook/Policy Revision**

The RN to BSN faculty team reviews the most current edition of the SMSU RN to BSN Nursing Student Handbook at least once each academic year and may provide feedback to the Department Chair/Director of Nursing. At the beginning of every fall semester, the updated handbook will be posted on the RN to BSN Nursing website and in the D2L Brightspace RN to BSN Program Information Center. All students are expected to follow the most current version of the handbook. Updates may also be issued during the academic year if needed.

All students will complete the Acknowledgement of Receipt of Handbook form upon entry into the RN to BSN Program.

## **National Student Nurses' Association Inc. Code of Academic and Clinical Conduct**

### **Preamble**

Students of nursing are responsible to society in learning the academic theory and clinical skills needed to provide nursing care. The clinical setting presents unique challenges and responsibilities while caring for human beings in a variety of health care environments.

The Code of Academic and Clinical Conduct is based on an understanding that to practice nursing as a student is an agreement to uphold the trust that society has placed in us. The statements of the Code provide guidance for the nursing student in the personal development of an ethical foundation and need not be limited strictly to the academic or clinical environment but can assist in the holistic development of the person.

### **A Code for Nursing Students**

As students are involved in the clinical (experiential) and academic environments, we believe that ethical principles are a necessary guide to professional development. Therefore, within these environments we:

1. Advocate for the rights of all clients.
2. Maintain client confidentiality.
3. Take appropriate action to ensure the safety of clients, self, and others.
4. Provide care for the client in a timely, compassionate, and professional manner.
5. Communicate client care in a truthful, timely, and accurate manner.
6. Actively promote the highest level of moral and ethical principles and accept responsibility for our actions.
7. Promote excellence in nursing by encouraging lifelong learning and professional development.
8. Treat others with respect and promote an environment that respects human rights, values, and choice of cultural and spiritual beliefs.
9. Collaborate in every reasonable manner with the academic faculty and clinical staff to ensure the highest quality of client care.
10. Use every opportunity to improve faculty and clinical staff understanding of the learning needs of nursing students.
11. Encourage faculty, clinical staff, and peers to mentor nursing students.
12. Refrain from using any technique or procedure for which the student has not been adequately trained.
13. Refrain from any deliberate action or omission of care in the academic or clinical setting that creates unnecessary risk of injury to the client, self, or others.
14. Assist the staff nurse or preceptor in ensuring that there is full disclosure and that proper authorizations are obtained from clients regarding any form of treatment or research.

15. Abstain from the use of alcoholic beverages or any substances in the academic and clinical setting that impair judgment.
16. Strive to achieve and maintain an optimal level of personal health.
17. Support access to treatment and rehabilitation for students who are experiencing impairments related to substance abuse and mental or physical health issues.
18. Uphold school policies and regulations related to academic and clinical performance, reserving the right to challenge and critique rules and regulations as per school grievance policy.

## **Academic Honesty**

### ***Southwest Minnesota State University Policy***

#### **I. Academic Honesty**

- A. The aim of the academic honesty policy is to maintain the academic integrity of Southwest Minnesota State University and promote an intellectual climate of honesty and integrity. To maintain an environment of academic integrity all students are required to accept personal responsibility for their work at SMSU. Any offense against the academic honesty policy compromises the educational integrity of SMSU and will be considered a grave offense.
- B. Offenses against academic honesty are acts which unjustly advance one's academic standing at SMSU and include knowingly permitting or knowingly aiding a person in an offense against the academic policy.

#### **II. Forms of Academic Dishonesty**

In line with the National Association of Student Personnel Administrator (NASPA), SMSU's academic dishonesty will include the following forms:

- A. *Plagiarism*: Presenting someone else's work or ideas as your own. Plagiarism will include, but not be limited to:
  1. Submitting someone else's work or ideas as your own, including but not limited to homework assignments, term papers, research reports, lab reports, group projects, artistic works, tests, or class presentations.
  2. Submitting someone else's electronic work as your own, including video clips, audio clips, electronic files, electronic programs, and any other copied electronic page, document, article, review, etc.
  3. Submitting someone else's work as your own with minor alterations. Paraphrasing without proper citation is also plagiarism.
  4. Submitting someone else's work without appropriate use of quotations, paraphrases, footnotes, or references.
- B. *Cheating*: Using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, or study guide.

Cheating will include, but not be limited to:

1. Copying from someone else during any type of examination.
2. Communicating answers to an exam with other students and this includes allowing someone else to copy your own exam during a test.
3. Using any material not permitted by the instructor for an examination.
4. Requesting, acquiring, possessing, or providing someone else with an examination or portion of an examination without consent of the instructor.

C. *Fabrication*: Falsifying any information. Fabrication will include, but not be limited to:

1. Submitting or presenting falsified research.

D. *Tampering*: Tampering with the instructor's evaluation tools and/or documents.

Tampering will include, but not be limited to:

1. Changing, attempting to change, or falsifying academic records, including attendance records or sign-in sheets.
2. Tampering with an examination, homework assignment, or project after it has been corrected.

E. *Assisting in Dishonesty*: Aiding or attempting to aid someone else to commit an act of dishonesty. Assistance will include, but not be limited to:

1. Any student who aids another student in the performance of the above acts or has clear knowledge of another student's misconduct concerning academic honesty and does not bring it to the attention of the proper authorities (instructor, Director of Nursing, and the Department of Nursing Chair) will be held responsible for their non-action and subject to disciplinary measures for academic dishonesty.

F. All discussions and assignments submitted as part of nursing coursework must be the student's own original work. The ability to access, interpret, and synthesize evidence is essential to achieving our End of Program Student Learning Outcomes (EOPSLOs). Therefore, the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) sources is strictly prohibited unless explicitly permitted in the assignment instructions. Any external contributions, including ideas or text from other sources, must be properly quoted and cited each time they are referenced. Failure to do so constitutes a violation of SMSU's Academic Honesty Policy. Allegations of academic misconduct will be addressed in accordance with the procedures outlined in the Academic Honesty Policy.

G. Any other forms of academic dishonesty as outlined in the instructor's syllabus.

### **III. Procedures for Reporting Incidents of Academic Dishonesty**

#### **A. Procedures**

1. The faculty member will meet with the student regarding the specific charge, consider the evidence, and hear the student's explanation. If it is not possible to meet with the student, the faculty member may proceed to number 2 below.
2. If the faculty member determines that the student has violated the Academic Honesty Policy, the faculty member informs the student in person or via U.S. Mail of the consequences of the violation and the grade-related sanctions the faculty member will impose. Faculty members must recommend any additional sanctions, (such as suspension, expulsion, etc.) to the appropriate Dean for action.
3. The faculty member completes an "Academic Dishonesty Incident Report Form" and forwards the completed form to the appropriate Dean. The form is found on the SMSU website at the Academic Deans' Office webpage.
4. The Dean informs the student in writing that:
  - (a) This form has been filed with the Dean's office.
  - (b) The Dean may impose sanctions in addition to those imposed by the faculty member in the event of subsequent, serious, or multiple violations; and
  - (c) The student has a right to appeal the sanction(s) given by the faculty member as described below.
5. The Dean keeps the complaint form, any supporting documentation, and records of the adjudication on file.

#### **B. Sanctions**

1. An incident of academic dishonesty that is determined to be minor in nature may result in one or more of the following sanctions: a warning; a verbal or written reprimand; or a reassessment of a resubmitted assignment with an appropriate reduction in points.
2. An incident of academic dishonesty that is determined to be major in nature may result in one or more of the following penalties: a failing grade for the assignment or test; a failing grade for the class; suspension from SMSU; expulsion from SMSU; or the revocation of a degree.
3. The punitive options available are not limited to the sanctions specified in the previous sections.

### **IV. Appeals**

A student wishing to appeal the faculty member's decision must submit a written appeal stating the grounds for such appeal within 5 class days of receipt of the written decision of the faculty member. This written appeal is to be routed through the appropriate

Academic Dean's office. The Dean will review the appeal, and decide if it meets the criteria for an appeal using the following guidelines:

Except as required to explain the basis of new information, an appeal shall be limited to a review for one or more of the following purposes:

1. To determine whether the decision was rendered fairly considering the charges and information presented, and in conformity with prescribed procedures giving the complaining party a reasonable opportunity to prepare and to present information that the Academic Honesty Policy was violated and giving the accused student a reasonable opportunity to prepare and to present a response to those allegations. Deviations from designated procedures will not be a basis for sustaining an appeal unless significant prejudice results.
2. To determine whether the decision reached regarding the accused student was based on substantial information, that is, whether there were facts in the case that, if believed by the fact finder, were sufficient to establish that a violation of the policy occurred.
3. To determine whether the sanction(s) imposed were appropriate for the violation of the policy.
4. To consider new information, sufficient to alter a decision or other relevant facts not brought out in the original hearing, because such information and/or facts were not known to the person appealing at the time of the original Hearing.

If an appeal does not meet the criteria for appeal, the appeal may be rejected, and the student will be notified in writing.

If the appeal has merit, it is to be routed to the Academic Appeals Committee for a hearing. Procedures for the appeal hearing are found in SMSU Procedure G-005, Academic Appeals Committee.

All students will complete the Academic Honesty Statement form upon entrance into the RN to BSN Program.

### **SMSU Department of Nursing Plagiarism Policy**

The SMSU Department of Nursing adheres to the [SMSU Academic Honesty Policy](#) (A-032). When a lack of academic honesty is a concern, the course instructor(s) will alert the SMSU Department Chair and the Director of Nursing, who will then communicate with the student.

All discussions and assignments submitted while completing nursing coursework must be your own. Students' ability to access and synthesize evidence is foundational to our End of Program Student Learning Outcomes (EOPSLOs). Thus, contributions from Artificial Intelligence (AI) sources are unacceptable and will be considered a form of plagiarism (unless otherwise noted in assignment directions). Contributions from anyone or anything else must be properly quoted and cited every time they are used.

Failure to do so violates [SMSU's Academic Honesty Policy](#). Any allegations of academic misconduct will be adjudicated as outlined in the [Academic Honesty Policy](#).

Repercussions may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Failing grade on assignment (0 points)
  - The repercussions may include the student successfully completing the plagiarized assignment while adhering to academic honesty without a change in original grade. In cases with this requirement, failure to complete the assignment successfully will result in not passing the course.
- A failing grade in the nursing course
- Expulsion from the SMSU Nursing Program

The SMSU Department of Nursing does not allow nursing students to withdraw from a nursing course to avoid receiving an “F” grade due to academic honesty concerns.

**Degree Check Process:**

<https://www.smsu.edu/campuslife/registrationrecords/graduation/degree-check-process.html>

Students must complete their Degree Check by March 1st of the year of Commencement.

Note: To verify the SMSU University policy on completing a degree in December and being eligible to attend May commencement, please refer to the SMSU Graduation Policy at <https://www.smsu.edu/campuslife/registrationrecords/graduation/policies.html>