



**Registered Nurse Handbook
2025-2026 Academic Year**

STUDENT NURSE HANDBOOK

DEPARTMENT OF NURSING
1115 N. Roberts Street
Helena, MT 59601

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Nightingale Pledge

I solemnly pledge myself here, in the presence of this assembly, to practice my profession with integrity.

I will not take or knowingly administer any harmful drug.

I will do all in my power to maintain and elevate the standard of my profession.

I will hold in confidence all personal matters committed to my keeping.

I will devote myself to the healing, protection, and welfare of those entrusted to my care.

I will act with compassion and equality in all ethical matters.

I will commit to interdisciplinary collaboration and lifelong learning.

I fully acknowledge the seriousness of the responsibility that I accept in my calling,

And I make these promises solemnly, freely and upon my honor.

~1893

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To keep up with the rapidly changing healthcare delivery system, the Nursing Department posts the nursing student handbook on the website and the Nursing Information page in the Learning Management System. The student is responsible for reviewing and complying with the information in this handbook. The Nursing Department will notify the students of changes that are made to the handbook.

Welcome

Welcome to Helena College Nursing Program. This handbook is intended to provide you with information and procedures related to the Registered Nurse Program at Helena College.

Helena College has an Associate of Science Registered Nurse (A.S.R.N.) Program that follows the statewide A.S.R.N. curriculum. Program accreditation was awarded by the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN) in 2011 and continuing accreditation at the most recent cite visit in 2024 was awarded through 2032. The A.S.R.N. Program is approved by the Montana State Board of Nursing.

Helena College is accredited by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities, an institutional accrediting body recognized by the Council for Higher Education.

Mission and Vision of Helena College

Mission Statement

Helena College supports our diverse community by providing paths and tools necessary to assist learners in achieving their educational and career goals.

Vision Statement

Helena College aspires to empower our students through impactful, affordable, life-long education that is responsive to the needs of our community, in ways that are enriching, collaborative, and equitable.

Guiding Principles

Helena College identified the following guiding principles using campus-wide open forums and listening sessions.

- Effectiveness
- Stewardship
- Impact
- Equity

Mission and Philosophy of Helena College Nursing Program

Mission

To provide exceptional nursing education using innovative academic, simulated, and clinical experiences that prepare our graduates as safe, competent, direct-care nurses poised to meet the diverse healthcare needs of our community.

Philosophy

The Helena College Nursing Department's educational philosophy supports the belief that professional nursing is best served by highly educated members who meet the ever-changing healthcare needs of the population in their care. The A.S.R.N. graduates are entry-level practitioners competent to practice

as a direct caregiver in a variety of healthcare settings, which include diverse patient populations. The Nursing Program Faculty believe the following:

- **Communication** is an integral part of all nursing interactions and facilitates caring, compassionate, and culturally aware patient care.
- **Professional behaviors** are important. Nursing graduates function within the ethical and legal framework of nursing and are responsible for providing and maintaining high standards of nursing practice.
- Solid **assessment** skills and the ability to effectively apply the nursing process to identify actual and potential healthcare needs form the foundation for **clinical decision-making** and sound nursing judgments.
- **Managing care** is achieved using the nursing process, in **collaboration** with the client, their support persons, and interdisciplinary professionals.
- Nurses strive to provide **caring interventions** and to create supportive, caring environments that promote the wellbeing of the patient.

In addition, the Nursing Faculty consider nursing education to be driven by the application of critical thinking and clinical judgment, and they incorporate teaching/learning strategies using innovative approaches and evidence-based research. To address learning style differences, curriculum experiences are structured from simple to complex and are delivered in varied methodologies to connect with all learning domains.

Nursing education is seen as a collaborative process that requires the involvement of college administrators and staff, nursing faculty, and nursing students. Every nursing student entering the nursing program brings unique experiences, capabilities, learning styles, and motivation for learning. The nursing faculty recognizes the need for a holistic approach toward students who bring individual challenges as they enter the program. Faculty strive to connect students with all available resources on campus to facilitate student success.

Embracing this philosophy, the Nursing Faculty at Helena College address the Educational Program Student Learning Outcomes by incorporating the *Educational Competencies RN for graduates of Associate Degree Nursing programs identified by the National League for Nursing (2010). All coursework and material covered in this program is intentional to prepare the student to function in the nursing role and to facilitate the student's ability to pass the National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX) that is taken after graduation and is a requirement of licensure to practice as a Nurse.

*Educational Competencies RN

- ✚ Human Flourishing- Nurses must use their skills and knowledge to enhance human flourishing for their patients, communities, and themselves. This is achieved by the nurse serving as an advocate for patients and families in ways that promote their self-determination, integrity, and ongoing growth as human beings.
- ✚ Nursing Judgment- Nurses must demonstrate sound nursing judgment by making judgments in practice, substantiated with evidence that integrates nursing science in the provision of safe, quality care and promotes the health of patients within a family and community context.

- ✚ Professional Identity- Nurses should continue to develop their professional identity. Implement one's role as a nurse in ways that reflect integrity, responsibility, ethical practices, and an evolving identity as a nurse committed to evidence-based practice, caring, advocacy, and safe, quality care for diverse patients within a family and community context.
- ✚ Spirit of Inquiry- It is important that nurses approach all issues and problems within a spirit of inquiry. Examine the evidence that underlies clinical nursing practice to challenge the status quo, question underlying assumptions, and offer new insights to improve the quality of care for patients, families, and communities.

The courses of the Helena College Registered Nurse Program are designed to meet the requirements of the Montana State Board of Nursing, the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN), and the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU).

Conceptual Framework

In addition to applying the vision and guiding principles of the college, the purpose of the HC Nursing Department is to prepare qualified nurses for entry-level, direct-care positions to meet the workforce needs of our diverse healthcare community. To achieve this, the framework for the curriculum is an adaptation of Benner's Novice to Expert Theory and the principles of Adult Learning Theory. Benner's theory focuses on the construct of knowledge and skill development progressing over time, with proper educational information and experiences. This relates to the concepts of adult learning theory in that adults (1) need to understand why they are learning something, (2) learn best by doing, and (3) learn best when they are able to see the concept and apply it to real-life situations.

Learning is an active process that includes cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains. Faculty facilitates the learning process by introducing concepts and building on those concepts in each subsequent semester, implementing active learning techniques in class to meet the needs of students with diverse backgrounds and experiences. Learning occurs through participation in specified experiences and exercises designed to help the student learn to identify, understand, and apply nursing concepts and principles. Adhering to Benner's theory and including the revised Bloom's Taxonomy, nursing instruction in the first and second semester (A.S.R.N.) will target "remembering, understanding, and applying". The last two semesters build on this foundational knowledge and move on to "analyzing and evaluating" concepts and patient scenarios to help guide the student toward independent practice as an entry-level nurse.

The A.S.R.N. graduates use critical thinking and judgment and demonstrate clinical competence and accountability as nurse generalists committed to caring for others and valuing the profession of nursing.

A.S.R.N. Educational Program Student Learning Outcomes

1. Use the Nursing Process to provide safe, effective, and individualized care, to address the assessed needs of the client.
2. Demonstrate effective, therapeutic communication skills for delivering patient care, providing patient education, and being an effective member of the healthcare team.
3. Practice collaboratively within legal and ethical frameworks and professional scope of practice when managing all aspects of client care.

4. Coordinate and prioritize care delivery to best meet the identified needs of the client, community, or group, embracing diversity while utilizing evidence-based practices and caring interventions.
5. Safely and accurately perform all nursing skills under the pressure, distractions, and interruptions of an actual nursing experience.

Expected Program Outcomes for the A.S.R.N. Graduate

1. The program's annual licensure examination pass rate will meet or exceed the national average for first time takers for the NCLEX-RN (National Council Licensure Examination for Registered Nurses).
2. Eighty percent (80%) of students who start on the first day of NRS 230 in the Traditional RN Program will complete the program within two (2) academic years (four semesters).
3. Ninety percent (90%) of graduates will be employed as an RN within six months of graduation.
4. Ninety (90%) of the surveys returned by graduates will indicate that they are satisfied with their education.
5. Ninety (90%) of the surveys returned by employers will indicate satisfaction with the graduate's performance.

Armstrong, P. (2010). Bloom's Taxonomy. Vanderbilt University Center for Teaching. Retrieved August 16, 2021, from <https://cft.vanderbilt.edu/guides-sub-pages/blooms-taxonomy/>.

Benner, P. (2001). *From Novice to Expert Excellence and Power in Clinical Nursing Practice*. Commemorative Edition. Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Prentice Hall Health.

National League for Nursing. (2010). Outcomes and Competencies for Graduates of Practical/Vocational, Diploma, Associate Degree, Baccalaureate, Master's, Practice Doctorate, and Research Doctorate Programs in Nursing (pp. 7-37). New York, New York: National League for Nursing.

Nursing Program Handbook Statement

Please note that the Nursing Program Handbook is a dynamic document that evolves and changes along with the program. Additions and/or changes may be made to this handbook during your enrollment as necessary. To keep up with the rapidly changing healthcare delivery system, the Nursing Department posts the nursing student handbook on the website and the Nursing Information page in the Learning Management System (LMS). The student is responsible for partnering with the Nursing Department in staying abreast of changes. It is the student's responsibility to become familiar with this handbook, having it readily accessible when questions regarding policies and procedures arise. Students are strongly advised not to seek clarification from fellow students, as the information received may be incorrect. **Clarification of a policy or procedure should come directly from the college or program guidelines.**

For concerns, questions, or problems related to the program, the student should first discuss them with the individual course faculty. If the concern is not resolved, the student may schedule an appointment with the Director of Nursing.

Application and Program Entry

The A.S.R.N. Program prepares graduates to provide direct care to clients, individuals, or groups in a variety of structured settings with clear policies and procedures. Due to limited clinical sites for client

care experiences and State Board of Nursing regulations regarding student-to-faculty ratio, the Director and Nursing Faculty will determine acceptance into the program.

Prerequisite coursework must have been taken within the last fifteen years (within the last 5 years for science courses) prior to admission to the Nursing Program to fulfill program requirements. Exceptions will be considered on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of the Registrar and Director of Nursing. This includes all general education requirements. Students may repeat TWO general education courses to achieve a “C” grade or above, prior to the student’s admission to the nursing program and courses. A maximum of 2 prerequisite retakes will be allowed. Written permission from the Director of Nursing is required before taking any prerequisite course a third (3) time. If permission is not obtained, the second grade will be used to calculate GPA. Students must obtain a minimum 2.75 GPA in the prerequisite courses to apply to the A.S.R.N. Program.

In addition to the prerequisite coursework, students must complete the TEAS exam with a minimum score of 75%. The TEAS exam may be taken up to four (4) times, and the student may submit their highest score. *Preference given for applicants with a total score of 58 or higher.* Applicants scoring 55-57 total points *may* be admitted to the program at the discretion of the Director of Nursing. Please see the A.S.R.N. Application Packet for more information regarding points, GPA, and TEAS score ranges for recent application cycles.

Transfer Students

Transfer Students will be required to have their transcripts evaluated by the admissions department prior to applying to the nursing program. Transferability and acceptance of non-core curriculum nursing credits into the Helena College Nursing Program is not guaranteed.

Nursing Program Requirements

CPR/BLS Requirement

Each student must be certified in CPR (Basic Cardiac Life Support for Healthcare), as part of the application process, and current certification must be maintained for all clinical experiences. Certification must include a hands-on skills test. Online only certifications will not be accepted. Written documentation, including presentation of the current card, is required for progression through the Nursing Program. Students are responsible for seeking appropriate certification classes, maintaining current certification, and are responsible for paying all fees. Students will be notified if the card is expiring and will be expected to get the card renewed prior to it expiring. **Failure to do so will result in the student not being able to continue in the clinical rotations and may delay progression. Clinical make ups are not arranged for students’ failure to maintain their current documentation.**

Basic Health Screening

A current (within the last 6 months) physical examination by the student’s health care provider is required before acceptance into the Nursing Program. The physical form is in the application packet.

Immunizations/ Vaccinations

- Current immunization records, including Diphtheria, Pertussis, Tetanus, Hepatitis A & B vaccine, documentation of Varicella (chicken pox) vaccination or titer, MMR, and Polio, must be provided

before the start of classes. Proof of absence of active TB (negative PPD, negative QuantiFERON TB gold, or negative chest X-ray) is also part of the application process.

- Students must provide evidence of the year's current Influenza A (Flu) vaccine or signed religious exemption. Approval of exemptions are at the discretion of the clinical facility.
 - Students must complete all clinical requirements and hours to progress forward to the next semester and to graduate. If a student is unable to complete clinicals, the nursing program is unable to progress the student forward, and this may delay or interrupt the student from successfully completing the Nursing Program.
- The costs associated with immunizations, titers, or other are the responsibility of the student.

Criminal Background Checks

To maintain a safe patient environment and to decrease the facility's liability, most clinical agencies require cleared criminal background checks before students are allowed into clinical facilities. Students who do not pass the criminal background check may be unable to attend clinical courses (Determined by individual clinical institutions) and, therefore, unable to complete their program of study. To remain in compliance with our healthcare partners, Helena College Nursing requires that the background check be done as part of the application process, once the students have been accepted into the nursing program.

Students with background checks that reveal a finding will be evaluated individually to determine whether they will be eligible for clinical placement and state licensure for their respective degree program. **Any fees or costs associated with background checks are the responsibility of the student.**

Acceptance to and graduation from the Nursing Program do not assure eligibility to sit for the nursing licensing examination. The Montana Board of Nursing makes all final decisions on eligibility for testing and issuance of licenses.

Drug Screening

Additionally, some clinical partners are also now requiring students to have a negative drug screen prior to being permitted in the clinical facility. Drug screen test fees are also the responsibility of the student. Any drug screen that reveals a positive result will be evaluated individually to determine whether the student will be eligible for the clinical placement.

Liability Insurance

Each student must have professional liability insurance while enrolled in the nursing program. The cost of this coverage is included in student fees. Students do not need to purchase their own liability insurance as it is provided through enrollment.

Nursing Program Progression

Curriculum and Grades

Helena College Department of Nursing follows the Montana Statewide Curriculum for Registered Nurses. The concepts taught in the theory classes are applied in the clinical setting. The curriculum is

designed to allow sequential progression through the program. Continuation in the program is based upon successful scholastic achievement, satisfactory clinical/laboratory competence, and personal qualifications for the practice of nursing as cited in the Administrative Rules of Montana Program Standards and Program Evaluation (ARM 24.159.604; ARM 24.159.609). The following academic requirements *must be met for progression* in the Nursing Program.

1. The HC Nursing Programs require a passing grade of “C” (not “C-”) or higher in all nursing courses to meet progression standards.
2. The HC Nursing Department grading scale is as follows: 93%-100% (A); 90-92% (B+); 87-89% (B); 85-86% (B-); 81-84% (C+); 78-80% (C). Grades for all course assignments will be recorded as earned with no mathematical rounding. For example, a score of 77.9%= 77% and is not a passing grade.
3. A minimum grade of “C” (78%) is required in all nursing courses, including clinicals and embedded general education courses, to continue to the next semester. (Please refer to specific course or clinical syllabi for further guidelines.)
4. Students move through the curriculum as a cohort. All Nursing Program courses in one semester must be successfully completed **prior** to the student starting the next semester of nursing coursework. If a student needs to repeat a nursing course or takes an (I) incomplete, they will not progress to the next semester of nursing courses until the repeated course is successfully completed.
5. Students achieving lower than a “C” grade in any nursing course while admitted to the nursing program will be unable to progress in the program. Failure to achieve a minimum of 78% in the theory, skills labs, or clinical area will result in the student failing the nursing course. If a student fails a class with a didactic and clinical component, both must be repeated unless the faculty recommends otherwise. Failure of **any two nursing courses** will result in dismissal from the Nursing Program.
6. Students who have withdrawn, dropped, or failed any courses required for the nursing curriculum must seek readmission to the program. (See Readmission Procedure p.11)
7. Students may repeat a nursing course in which they earn a “W” or a grade of less than a “C” only once. **A total of only one nursing course may be repeated before dismissal from the program.**
8. If an enrolled nursing student is convicted of a felony, the student will not be able to progress in the Nursing Program.
9. The ATI (Assessment Technologies Institute) comprehensive assessment and review program exams are required components of the Registered Nursing Program.

Challenging a Course

Students may not challenge nursing courses. However, current Licensed Practical Nurses who want to continue their education to become a Registered Nurse may be able to receive credit for prior learning (Credit by Licensure) and will be required to demonstrate competencies in courses for which they get credit.

Repeating Nursing Courses

A student who fails a nursing (NRSG) course should meet with the appropriate instructor to develop an educational plan for success to enhance future chance of success. Copies of the written plan for success will be placed in the student's file. Failure of nursing courses prohibits progression. A student who fails a nursing course is responsible for making an appointment with the Director of Nursing to discuss continuing in the program. A letter of intent to reapply must be submitted by the application deadline. Failure of any two nursing courses results in dismissal from the Nursing Program.

Withdrawal/Incomplete

Withdrawal from a nursing course to protect academic integrity has the same impact as an F. Refer to the college catalog policy/procedure.

Readmission Procedure

Students wishing to re-enroll after withdrawal from the Nursing Program must meet HC re-enrollment policies and reapply to the Nursing Program. Students in the 'withdrawn' or 'failed' category may apply for readmission to the Nursing Program **one time only**.

A returning student must:

1. Reapply for admission to the nursing program to ensure program placement. If there is an opening due to attrition, a student may write a letter to the Nursing department asking for readmission to that semester.
2. Adhere to the most recent catalog requirements.
3. Plan with an Academic Advisor to develop a degree plan that meets all curricular and program requirements.
4. Submit a new physical examination form, current CPR certification, and current immunizations.
5. Validate competency in clinical skills.

Program Completion Requirements

Students must complete the Nursing Program within the allotted time from the date of their initial admission to the nursing major. Students who do not complete the program within this timeframe must apply for readmission, meet current criteria for admission, and have their previous credits evaluated. All college core requirements must be met before the student may enroll in the nursing courses.

Graduation

Students preparing to graduate from the Nursing Program must complete all course requirements as outlined in the current catalog and follow the progression requirements listed above. It is important to note that the Nursing Program standards, grades and grading scale, and attendance requirements are

more rigorous than other college courses. The nursing rigor is designed to prepare the students for the National Licensure Exam (NCLEX) and also to prepare them for their role as a professional nurse.

State Licensure

To practice as a nurse, you must pass the National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX). The National Council of State Boards of Nursing online registration for the NCLEX exam is found at: <https://www.ncsbn.org/nclex-application-and-registration.htm>. Successful completion of the Nursing Program does not guarantee a graduate is allowed to take the NCLEX or obtain a Montana Nursing license if they have a felony or other criminal conditions. Contact the Montana Board of Nursing with questions.

Applications for state licensure are available by contacting the [Montana State Board of Nursing](http://www.nurse.mt.gov) website (www.nurse.mt.gov) or at the following address:

Montana State Board of Nursing
301 South Park/ P.O. Box 200513
Helena, MT 59620-0513
Telephone: (406) 841-2340

Nursing Program Standards and Procedures

Academic Integrity

The Nursing Faculty believes that honesty and integrity are crucial values to the nurse and profession. Helena College expects its students to adhere to a high standard of academic integrity. It is a violation of academic integrity standards and the student code of conduct to present the ideas, designs, works, or words of another person as one's own efforts, or to permit another person to do so. **Students are responsible for understanding and adhering to all Helena College UM policies and the standards and procedures of the Nursing Program.** *For more information, refer to page 28 of this handbook: Academic Policies and Structure.*

Attendance

Attendance at each scheduled class or lab is expected. Excessive absences can negatively impact the student's ability to meet course learning outcomes. It is expected that students adjust personal / work-related schedules around their assigned class and clinical schedules. Students are expected to adhere to the course policies related to attendance and are responsible for all activities associated with each class. Students are responsible for specific course syllabi content regarding attendance.

All non-emergent appointments for self or family members should be scheduled for days off or after class hours. In such situations, faculty will be advised to provide accommodations for students who are quarantined or on restrictions due to illness or exposure. For unavoidable absences, it is expected that the student will contact the faculty prior to the absence and make necessary accommodations. Faculty will not automatically schedule classes via TEAMS to accommodate student absences.

The Nursing Faculty may establish variations of attendance expectations within their course to meet the educational learning outcomes of their specific course. Students are expected to notify Nursing Faculty prior to class if not attending and are responsible for any material covered in class during their absence.

Students with frequent absences and/or tardiness may have professional behavior points deducted from their overall course grade (see professional behaviors rubric). Clinicals and nursing labs are an important part of the nursing curriculum requirements, and the student will be required to make up missed lab/clinical time at the discretion of the clinical or lab instructor.

Advising

Each student is assigned an academic advisor once the admission application is complete. Students may find information about their assigned advisor on MyHC > [Student Support Center](#). The advisor's role, in part, is to facilitate the students' course registration and to assist in the identification of resources available to support student success. Students are encouraged to utilize all resources Helena College UM provides to assist with their success in the Nursing Program.

Each student is ultimately responsible and accountable for their progression through the Nursing Program and for meeting all academic requirements for graduation.

Clinical Information

Clinical Attendance

Clinical is an essential component of nursing education; therefore, students are expected to attend every scheduled clinical. If the student has an emergency or severe illness, the student must notify the clinical instructor or preceptor and the didactic instructor *prior* to the beginning of the clinical session from which they will be absent. ***An unexcused absence (no-call, no-show) from the clinical setting may result in dismissal from the program.***

The clinical experiences in each course have been designed by the faculty to meet course outcomes. Failure by the student to meet the clinical objectives due to absenteeism will result in a "Does Not Meet Expectations" evaluation for the semester and a *Fail* for the clinical course.

All clinical orientations are part of the clinical experience, and attendance is **mandatory**.

Time missed during the clinical experience will be made up at the discretion of the clinical instructor and the course faculty. Clinical make-up may include a makeup day in the clinical setting, a written virtual clinical assignment worth 8 hours, and/or attendance in a clinical makeup simulation in the Sim Lab. If the faculty or instructor arranges a clinical makeup, it is the student's responsibility to arrange *their personal schedule* to ensure attendance at the clinical makeup. **It is not the faculty or instructor's responsibility to create makeup clinicals following the student's personal schedule.**

Clinical Grades

Clinical grade is determined by the course faculty based on observations/documentary feedback of the clinical instructor, assessed student learning, and the student's ability to improve across the semester. The Clinical Evaluation Tool and clinical assignments will be used to assess student performance in the clinical rotation and to determine the clinical grade.

Nursing Student accountability is expected. Clinical paperwork (clinical journals, evaluation forms, verification of hours forms, etc.) is part of the evaluation process for the clinical experience and must be submitted in a timely manner to the faculty for grading. These forms must be completed and signed by the student and submitted by the due date.

Penalty for late submission of clinical paperwork or assignments:

- Up to 24h late = 10% deduction
- 24 – 48h late = 20% deduction
- 48 – 72h late = 50% deduction
- No assignments will be accepted after 72h and score of zero “0” will be assigned *unless prior arrangements made with the instructor.*

If the clinical is failed, the student will be required to retake the course and clinical.

The Nursing Program Standards and Requirements related to grading and attendance are more stringent than the general requirements at Helena College. These rigorous expectations are designed to prepare students for the NCLEX exam and to become competent, capable, and responsible nursing professionals after graduation.

Demonstration of professional behaviors across all courses in the nursing programs is essential to the satisfactory achievement of nursing courses. ***Where there is failure on the part of the student to meet reasonable standards of performance or behavior, or when in the judgment of the faculty member, the amount of supervision necessary to ensure client safety is unreasonable, the faculty member has the authority to deny the student access to clients and to remove the student from the clinical setting.***

Clinical Access Denial

These criteria will be considered in denying the student access to clients:

1. Actions and/or events that demonstrate emotional instability.
2. Threatened bodily harm to clients, staff, faculty, or peers.
3. Harassment of clients, staff, faculty, or peers.
4. Under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
5. Indifference or insensitivity to client safety, comfort, or right to privacy.
6. Unprofessional behavior or attitude during interactions with clinical preceptors or other staff in the healthcare setting.
7. Lack of professional judgment.
8. Disregard for professional ethics.
9. Unsatisfactory or incomplete preparatory work.
10. Any health condition that makes it impossible for students to carry out their work without jeopardizing client or student safety and comfort.
11. Any other condition or circumstance that constitutes an unreasonable risk to the safety and well-being of the client and/or the student.
12. Failure to comply with the Healthcare facility Vaccination/Immunization policy.

13. Arrest and conviction of a crime as per the Montana State Board of Nursing.

14. Failure to abide by HC Nursing dress code and appearance policies.

Clinical Requirements

In addition to attendance at clinical orientation and all scheduled clinical days, students are expected to comply with the requirements of our clinical healthcare partners. ID badges, masks, and other forms of personal protective equipment may be required by the facility. Students **must comply** with these facility regulations to remain in clinicals. Each facility may also have varied requirements related to immunizations and waivers. **Students who are not in compliance with the facility immunization requirement will not be able to complete the clinical portion of the course. This may impact or delay progression in the Nursing Program.** Students who do not provide proof of current CPR and immunizations/appropriate waivers will not be allowed into the clinical area.

Communication / Chain of Command

If questions or concerns arise regarding any part of the Nursing Program, the student is reminded to follow the proper channels of communication. It is important to first speak with the person directly related to your question or issue. For example, inquiries about a course concept should be initially directed to the course instructor or clinical instructor. If that does not result in satisfaction, then the student should make an appointment with the program director. Most issues and concerns can be resolved by the Director of Nursing. For matters that are still unresolved, the student may contact the Academic Dean.

Confidentiality / Health Insurance Portability and Accountability (HIPAA)

Nursing students are frequently exposed to protected health information during their clinical experiences. Helena College Nursing students are expected to always observe and comply with HIPAA privacy rules. Failure to comply with or breach of confidentiality on the part of the student may result in the student's removal from the clinical setting.

- **Confidentiality of patient records and situations will always be maintained.** No patient chart is to be copied by any technological process. Patient information is not to be removed from any healthcare agency. Charts may not be left open for public view; report sheets may not be left in areas other than the nursing student's pocket. **Students violating this code will be subject to the facility's dismissal protocol and earn an unsatisfactory grade for the clinical experience.**
- Students are responsible for always maintaining patient privacy and dignity. Professional behavior will be continued in the clinical environment. Courteous professional behavior toward faculty, peers, patients/clients, staff, and hospital personnel is always expected. First violation will result in a student reprimand, and the event will be noted. **Second or subsequent violations may result in dismissal from the program.**
- It is a HIPAA violation to post pictures or any identifying information of patients on social media sites. **No photography is allowed at any clinical site.**

Electronic devices

Cell phones and I-watches

Cell phones and other electronic devices must be in silent mode during class, or lab activities, and turned off and stowed during tests/exams. Cell phones may be used in the clinical setting for clinical-related research (looking up a medication, diagnosis, or treatment). HOWEVER, unapproved use of cell phones (texting, messaging, gaming, Facebooking, etc.) will not be tolerated in the class or clinicals and are subject to loss of professional behavior points. **No photography at the clinical site.**

**Refer to the course syllabi and the college student handbook for acceptable use of electronic resources policy.*

Calculators

The use of calculators during tests is permitted upon direction by the instructor of the course. The calculator must be a simple four-function calculator (not a cell phone calculator). ATI proctored exams have a built-in calculator, and therefore, on ATI exams, the use of an outside calculator is prohibited.

Laptop

Student ownership of and/or permanent access to a computer is required at Helena College. Students benefit greatly from the ability to work and access online information and services at any time and from any place. For specific program requirements and additional information, please visit the Helena College website <http://www.helenacollege.edu/it/comprecommendations.aspx>

ATI tests are not compatible with smartphones or tablets. Laptops will be used for ATI testing.

General Expectations in the Nursing Program

- Student email communication will take place with only the students' Helena College email. It is typically the one that ends in "@mail.helenacollege.edu." Please check it regularly.
- Faculty, staff, and patients are to be addressed as "Dr.," "Mr.," "Mrs.," or "Ms.," along with their surname unless otherwise requested by the individual.
- Appropriate and professional language is respectful and should be used at all times. Appropriate language does not include profanity, slang terminology, expletives, or disrespectful remarks to peers or faculty.
- Unprofessional conduct may include but is not limited to, chronic tardiness or absence, failing to make appropriate arrangements if unable to attend class, lab, or clinical experiences, or displaying hostility (argumentative, disruptive, abusive, emotional outbursts, inability to problem solve, anger mismanagement, and complaints regarding the faculty and/or nursing programs).

Governance

Academic Standards Committee for Nursing

The Academic Standards Committee for Nursing is comprised of Nursing Faculty/Staff, Staff from the Registration and Admissions offices, and the General Education department. The Academic Standards

Committee reviews and updates the application and application process. Policies regarding the nursing program and student grievances/complaints are also reviewed by this committee.

Student/Faculty Forum

The student-faculty forum is composed of the nursing faculty, the director, the assistant, and two elected students from each nursing cohort. The forum provides a way for the faculty and students to communicate regarding concerns, suggestions, and questions in relation to nursing programs, the curriculum, and other relevant issues. Meetings are scheduled once a month during the school year. This also provides a means for the students to participate in the program assessment. The minutes of these meetings will be used to provide valuable data for program assessment, input, and development.

- *Responsibility of Faculty*

1. Increasing student awareness regarding program direction and faculty concerns.
2. Providing information and guidance regarding student concerns and participating in follow-up activities as indicated.
3. Fostering student/faculty interaction during joint meetings.
4. Notifying student representatives of changes to nursing program(s), policy, or handbook.

- *Responsibility of Student Representatives*

1. Increasing class awareness regarding committee activities.
2. Soliciting information from peers for committee agendas.
3. Assisting in problem solving to address agenda items.
4. Implementing committee/faculty suggestions and reporting outcomes to peers.
5. Contributing to program policy and curriculum development.

Community Advisory Board

The Community Advisory Board is made up of community members who provide expertise in the areas of nursing education, nursing practice, members of the nursing and general education faculty of Helena College, and a nursing student representative. The Community Advisory Board plays a critical role in program assessment and program development. The structure of the board and its members is designed to identify and accurately reflect needs, trends and issues rising in the nursing community.

Grading Scale in Nursing

The HC Nursing Department grading scale is as follows:

A	100-93
B+	92-90
B	89-87
B-	86-85
C+	84-81
C	80-78

F	≤ 77
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Faculty retains the final decision-making authority regarding grades earned in each course. Grades for all course assignments will be recorded as earned ***with no mathematical rounding***. This policy allows the faculty of the Department of Nursing to remove uncertainty and ensure integrity in the grading process for all students. Numerical averages will not be rounded (for example, 77.9 is a 77 %). Refer to the Helena College Student Handbook Policies for appealing a grade.

Grounds for Removal from Class/Clinical or Dismissal from the Nursing Program

1. It is the intent of the Director of Nursing, Faculty, and Clinical Resource Instructors to facilitate the student's progression toward becoming a registered nurse. However, the student has personal responsibility for proper conduct and actions within the nursing program. The following list is representative, but not inclusive of non-professional behaviors that may lead to removal from the classroom, lab, or clinical, and/ or dismissal from the Nursing Program.
2. Failing grade in Nursing Courses, Labs, or in Clinicals.
3. Failure/refusal to accomplish clinical assignments or unsatisfactory clinical progress.
4. Repeated inability to demonstrate safe patient care and/or accurate dosage and IV calculations.
5. Failure to display appropriate workplace principles (poor attitude, inappropriate unprofessional behavior, not following facility policy and procedures).
6. Not following established guidelines for notification of absence or tardiness at clinical (No-call, no-show).
7. Breach of confidentiality (includes but is not limited to copying information from clinical settings or photography of any kind at clinicals).
8. Unprofessional behavior that violates individual clinical facility or college expectations (theft, misconduct, etc.).
9. Conviction, possession, or distribution of illegal substances.
10. Any evidence of/suspected use of drugs or alcohol in the classroom, clinical, or lab settings, presents to class or clinicals under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
11. Actions and/or events that demonstrate emotional instability.
12. Threatened bodily harm to clients, staff, faculty, or peers.
13. Harassment of clients, staff, faculty, or peers.
14. Indifference or insensitivity to client safety, comfort, or right to privacy.
15. Lack of professional judgment.
16. Disregard for professional ethics.
17. Unsatisfactory or incomplete preparatory work.
18. Any health condition that makes it impossible for students to carry out their work without jeopardizing client or student safety and comfort.

19. Any other condition or circumstance that constitutes an unreasonable risk to the safety and well-being of the client and/or the student.
20. Arrest and conviction of a crime as per the Montana State Board of Nursing.
21. Failure to abide by HC Nursing dress code and appearance policies.

Health and Safety Processes for the Student

Safety and Safe Practices

Safety is our priority in the educational and nursing practice setting. Compliance with safety standards is expected of students in all educational settings. If a student breaches a safety standard, they will be removed from the learning setting, and remediation of the safety standard will be required before returning to the lab or clinical. Continued unsafe practice may result in clinical failure.

The student will be taught the principles and methods for Standard Precautions to prevent exposure to bloodborne pathogens. Healthcare workers are especially at risk for developing certain diseases due to exposure to needle sticks and splashed blood/body fluids. Hepatitis B, which infects thousands of healthcare workers, is preventable by immunization. Hepatitis B and HIV can be prevented through the consistent use of Standard Precautions. Efforts must be made to prevent exposure to these diseases. Standard Precautions must be followed by students and faculty in the clinical settings. Students must show immunization against Hepatitis B or must sign a waiver accepting responsibility for the potential consequences of not being immunized. **Students are required to report any exposures to their clinical instructor immediately.**

Pregnancy

Students who are pregnant or suspect that they may be pregnant should inform the Director of Nursing, their Faculty, and their clinical instructors so that appropriate adjustments and precautions can be made regarding the student's assignment of clients. Students are also encouraged to contact the Title IX Coordinator, Valerie Curtin, at Valerie.Curtin@HelenaCollege.edu, 406-447-6913.

Student Employment

It is strongly recommended that nursing students take into consideration the time commitments for classes, study time, labs and clinicals, family responsibilities, leisure time, and any other responsibilities before scheduling work while in the nursing program. If employment is unavoidable, it is important that the student **avoid working eight hours before clinicals. Students who work shifts before attending clinical experience and appear too fatigued to safely give care will be sent home from clinical.**

Program requirements are the same for all students, whether they choose to work or not. Students are expected to arrive at class, lab, or clinicals prepared. It is recommended that students work less than 20 hours per week for the best outcomes.

Nursing Course Syllabi

Each course syllabus will contain specific requirements for grading, assignments, and other methods of evaluating classroom, laboratory, and clinical components. The syllabus will include goals and student learning outcomes for each course.

Nursing course syllabi will be distributed to students on the first day of class and are posted on the course learning management system (Canvas). **The student is responsible for the information contained within the syllabus for each of their courses.**

Nursing Skills Lab

Attire in labs

Students are expected to wear their school scrubs and follow the uniform /dress code expectations outlined in this handbook. Hair must be pulled up and back. **Fingernails must be clipped short and unpolished...no polished or artificial nails in the clinical or lab setting!** Students found out of compliance with the dress code will be sent home to correct it before being allowed in the clinical or lab setting.

Skill Competence

Students will not be allowed to perform a skill in the clinical area until they have received instruction and/or demonstrated competence in that skill in the skills lab setting. Skills labs allow plenty of time to practice and develop new skills. All skills required for a nursing course must be successfully demonstrated to earn a passing grade for the course.

Skills Lab Purpose

The nursing skills lab provides an opportunity for students to have hands-on experience with nursing skills, experiences, and simulations. The skills lab is a safe learning environment where students can practice newly learned skills and make mistakes without risk of actual patient injury. Real-to-life situations are provided to students to allow them to experience the clinical setting in a structured, safe environment. Students are expected to learn how to perform nursing skills and provide return demonstrations of those skills individually or as a team in a simulated scenario. Students are encouraged to practice the skills repeatedly to gain 'muscle memory' and confidence prior to the return demonstration. Skills are expected to be performed accurately, efficiently, and in a timely fashion under pressure, as timing can be critical in actual patient care settings. Skills lab prepares the student to deal with stressors, distractions, and interruptions while completing skills that are common in the actual nursing setting. The lab instructors and simulation manager are available to help the student, per the student's request. Attendance and participation in all scheduled lab hours are expected.

Skills Lab Failure

A laboratory failure is earned when a student does not successfully demonstrate the critical elements of a skill in two attempts. Some scheduled laboratory sessions may include more than one skill. Each skill is considered on an individual basis. The student will receive written documentation of the reasons for a laboratory failure. This will be reflected in the Laboratory Assessment tool that is provided to the student by the clinical instructor.

Open Lab Sessions

Open lab sessions will be available on a weekly basis for student use. Open lab sessions are provided to allow students to practice and master skills that are required for the successful completion of nursing courses. **If a student demonstrates difficulty with a specific skill in the clinical area, a didactic or clinical instructor may require that a student attend an open lab session for remediation.**

Peer Mentorship Program

The Peer Mentorship Program at Helena College coordinates working relationships between nursing student cohorts. The purpose of this program is to build collegiality among student cohorts, encourage and reinforce team building, enhance leadership skills, and build leadership skills among student nurses through teaching and learning. In addition, the student-mentee/mentor relationship simulates the workplace in the nursing profession. The program prepares Helena College Nursing graduates to provide excellent patient care in a variety of healthcare settings and excel in team building and communication. Peer Mentor teams work together in skills labs, clinical settings, and outside classroom mentorship.

Benefits to Student Mentee:

- Feel welcomed as a Helena College Nursing Student
- Build confidence/reduce anxiety
- Gain Knowledge
- Increased understanding of scope & role of nurse
- Establish a supportive relationship
- Practice communication skills

Benefits to Student Mentor:

- Develop leadership abilities/skills
- Enhance & reinforce knowledge base & clinical skill set
- Build confidence/experience pride
- Opportunity to teach
- Increased understanding of scope & role of the nurse
- Practice communication skills

Professionalism/ Professional Conduct

Nursing in the State of Montana is regulated by the Montana State Board of Nursing (BON) in accordance with the Montana Code Annotated (MCA) and Rules derived thereof. It is reasonable that student nurses develop behaviors based on those deemed appropriate to the nursing profession and be disciplined based on the grounds for unprofessional conduct as indicated in the current Montana Nurse Practice Act (BON 24.159.23). A copy of the current Statutes and Rules relating to unprofessional conduct may be found on the BON website <https://rules.mt.gov/gateway/Subchapterhome.asp?scn=24.159.23>.

- The student is expected to treat all relationships with faculty, staff members, classmates, patients, and their families with professional behavior.
- Support and promote the activities of fellow students and healthcare professionals. Promotion of peers helps furnish a team approach to learning, task completion, problem-solving, and patient care.
- Be honest, compassionate, ethical, and responsible. The student must be forthright about errors or uncertainty. The students must be able to critically evaluate her or his own performance,

accept and act on constructive feedback, and look for ways to improve (i.e., participate in enriched educational activities).

- Exercise independent judgment and accept responsibility for one's own work.
- Show respect for individuals of different ages, appearance, ethnic background, religion, gender, and/or sexual orientation.
- In addition, the student must follow *all* established policies and procedures of the program and clinical affiliate sites.
- Professional conduct is nursing behavior, including acts, knowledge, and practices that, through professional experience, have become established by practicing nurses as conduct that is reasonably necessary for the protection of public interests and placing patient welfare first.
- Nursing behavior (acts, knowledge, and practices) that fails to conform to the accepted standards of the nursing profession, and which could jeopardize the health and welfare of the people, shall constitute unprofessional conduct, i.e., attire/dress, comments, and/or behavior.
- Unprofessional conduct may include being chronically tardy or absent (tardiness and absenteeism may negatively affect the student's grade; refer to course instructor's syllabi.), failing to make appropriate arrangements if unable to be at class, lab, or clinical experiences, or displaying hostility (argumentative, disruptive, abusive, emotional outbursts, inability to problem-solve, anger mismanagement).
- Professional conduct will be evaluated in each course, and clinical/lab experience via the specific course assessment tool.
- Students are expected to be prepared for all class/lab/clinical assignments.
- Points may be deducted from a student's grade in any nursing course due to unprofessional behavior. Please refer to the Professional Behavior Rubric for more information.

*Refer to [Helena College Student Code of Conduct](#) 2025-2026 for more details.

Student Complaints/Grievances

It is expected that students will first discuss all concerns and complaints regarding academic issues with the course instructor. **Open communication and the use of appropriate channels to resolve complaints are key to students' academic and professional success.** If, after discussing a concern or complaint with the instructor, the student feels that the issue is unresolved, the student may bring the issue to the Program Director. If the complaint or appeal is not resolved at the Program level, the student should refer to the student complaint process in the [Helena College student handbook](#) and/or the Helena College catalog for timelines and additional information. The complaints may be a general complaint, a course complaint, which includes a final course grade appeal, or an assignment grade dispute. Grade appeals follow the Helena College catalog. Student complaints follow the Helena College Student Handbook-Code of Conduct 2024-2025.

Substance Use

The use of drugs or alcohol is prohibited in the classroom, laboratory, and clinical setting. Use, possession, or distribution of alcoholic beverages on college premises or at college-sponsored activities except as permitted under college policies (Helena College Policy 600.6 Alcohol Sale, Possession,

and/or Consumption on College Property). Nursing students must adhere to Helena College Policy 600.6, Policy 400.4 (Drug-Free Schools & communities), and MT Board of Regents Policy 503.1, which prohibits the consumption of alcoholic beverages on Montana University properties. The Nursing department identifies that all designated clinical locations are an extension of the college, and therefore, students must also comply with these policies in the clinical setting. **Violations of any of these policies will result in disciplinary actions as outlined in the Student Code of Conduct.**

Testing

Tests and exams in nursing courses are designed to determine student comprehension of the material presented, assess the student's ability to understand concepts, and apply those to clinical situations. In all nursing courses, the exams should represent at least 60% of the course total. This may be higher in some courses.

The course exams and ATI exams are scheduled at the beginning of the semester. Plan early so you are available on the scheduled date and time. Avoid scheduling work or personal appointments on the test dates. Missing an exam day may result in a reduction of overall possible points on that exam, at the discretion of the faculty as outlined in the course syllabus. If you do not attend the ATI test(s) on the scheduled day, you will be scheduled to take it on the ATI Retake day.

To maximize class time, a review of exams during class time will be done at the discretion of the instructor. Students may make an appointment with the course instructor to review their exams in the nursing office. The exams must be reviewed in the nursing education office. Students may make notes but may not take photos of the exam.

Cell phones, smartphones, and smartwatches must be turned off and put away during tests/exams.

ATI Guidelines

- ATI Content Mastery exams are built into courses and incorporated across the curriculum. All ATI proctored exams must be taken in person on campus. There are no exceptions as ATI requires these proctored exams to be taken face-to-face.
- **Level 2 proficiency on all ATI exams is required.** Students scoring below Proficiency Level 2 are required to study and retake the exam. If a student scores below Proficiency Level 2 on the retake, they must complete the remediation process and submit the handwritten review material as evidence of understanding the missed concepts. Following remediation, the student's score will be an average of both ATI scores. Failure to submit the remediation assignment by the specified date/time will result in a loss of points.
- **ATI Content Mastery exams are a course requirement.** All ATI tests listed in any of the course syllabi are requirements of the specific course and the Nursing Program. If any of the ATI tests are not completed, the student will receive an incomplete as a final grade in the course. This will impact student progression in the program.
- Students are required to pay all fees associated with the ATI process by the beginning of the first semester. **There will be no refunds for this product once the student has accessed the product code.**

- Graduating students are required to take a Comprehensive Predictor ATI exam. Remediation is required if a student does not meet the recommended benchmark, as this exam reflects the student's probability of passing the NCLEX exam.

Test Make-Up Procedure

Make-up exams (quiz, exam, or ATI) in nursing courses are not allowed without PRIOR approval of the instructor (24 hours' notice).

- Authorized make-up exams will be placed in the testing center. It is the student's responsibility to contact the Testing Center and schedule their make-up within the timeframe specified by the instructor.
- Authorized make-up exams may be modified versions of the class exam.
- Testing center procedures (including both accommodated and make-up testing) are located on the LMS dashboard.
- The ATI exams are scheduled at the beginning of the semester. It is the student's responsibility to be available on the scheduled testing date and time. Students who do not attend the ATI test on the scheduled day will be scheduled to take it on the ATI Retake day.

Test Remediation Policy (Failed Exam Policy)

All students who score below 78% on a course exam or below the ATI course benchmark (Level 2 Proficiency) are expected to:

1. Review the questions/ content that you missed to gain an understanding of the missed material. You will likely see it again. There are test analysis forms available, which can help identify patterns in missed questions.
2. Complete any remediation as directed by the course instructor. **Points for remediation work are at the discretion of the instructor.**
3. Request a meeting with the instructor to discuss ways to improve your testing ability (optional but recommended).

Transportation

Students are responsible for their own transportation and related expenses for all clinical experiences. Students **must not** provide transportation for clients.

Uniform/ Dress Code for Clinical Settings, Clinical Simulation, and Labs

The purpose of the student uniform standards and dress code is to ensure an acceptable level of grooming and safety for the student and patient and to project a professional image. Credibility as a nurse is influenced by appearance, attitude, and behavior. These guidelines are in accordance with the policies of our clinical settings, in which we are invited to learn, as guests. These standards are also in compliance with national standards safeguarding the health and well-being of patients and healthcare workers. The faculty reserves the right to interpret the uniform standards and make decisions regarding professional dress and conduct. **A student violating any of the established guidelines may be dismissed from the lab or clinical setting.**

Name-tag

The HC Nursing student nametag is always worn as part of the uniform and shall be clearly visible on the upper chest area. The student fees cover one name tag only. If the name tag is lost or stolen, the student is responsible for the cost of replacement (\$5.00). Some healthcare facilities also provide student identification badges. These badges must be managed responsibly, and if lost, the clinical instructor must be notified immediately. Replacement fees may apply per facility.

Uniforms

It is required that the student be dressed in a school uniform—Dark Gray (A.S.R.N.) scrub top and bottoms with HC nursing logo embroidered on left chest. Matching lab jackets are optional. Lightweight, long-sleeved shirts may be worn under your scrub top if desired for warmth. These shirts should be matching dark gray, black, or white, plain with no design or logo. No hoodies or other non-uniform jackets are to be worn over uniform in clinicals.

Uniforms should be well-fitting, hemmed, and clean/unwrinkled. **The nursing scrubs/uniform will be worn anytime the student is representing Helena College Nursing in the community or clinical location.**

Shoes

Shoe requirements follow our healthcare facility policies. Per OSHA standards and infection control guidelines, **socks or stockings must be worn, and no open-toed shoes or sandals are permitted. No Crocs. Shoes should be comfortable and non-skid.** You will be on your feet a lot. There is no shoe color restriction. Please pick shoes that you will be able to wear in your nursing career.

Hair

Hair must be clean, neat, and present a well-groomed appearance. Hair shoulder-length or longer must be pulled back or put up. Hair accessories must be limited and neutral in color. Hair must be kept out of the face, regardless of the length.

Facial Hair

Facial hair must be clean and trimmed or shaved.

Personal Grooming

Students will maintain their personal hygiene. Students will bathe and use deodorant. Offensive body odor and/or cigarette smell are not permissible. **No smoking in your school uniform. No gum, smokeless tobacco, mints, food, or drink is allowed in patient care areas.** The use of tobacco products is prohibited on campus and all healthcare campuses.

No excessive make-up. No perfume, cologne, or aftershave is permitted. A clean, non-wrinkled uniform must be worn daily.

Nails

Nails should be **neatly trimmed short** (just visible over the top of the fingertips). Per CDC recommendations for hospitals **no nail polish or artificial nails.** This is an infection control issue. This will be strictly enforced by the faculty and clinical instructors.

Jewelry

All piercings must be studs/posts. Chains/necklaces must not be visible. No arm/ankle bracelets. A simple ring or wedding band may be worn. Excessive jewelry should be avoided. A watch may be worn and can be digital or analog. Any jewelry with sharp edges or accessories that pose a safety hazard to students or patients is not allowed.

Tattoos

Tattoos are allowed and are not required to be covered in the lab. However, tattoos may need to be covered in accordance with the clinical facility policy. If a tattoo is considered offensive (expletives, sexually explicit, hate language, gang affiliation, promotes discrimination, illegal drugs, profanity, or similar depictions), the student will be required to cover the tattoo in the clinical setting.

Written Assignments and APA format

Written work will conform to the American Psychological Association (APA) Publication Manual format, 7th edition. APA is the format most widely accepted within nursing academia. This includes electronic references. Refer to the course syllabi for specific grading requirements. The APA Publication Manual is available in the library. A recommended online APA resource is [Purdue Online Writing Lab](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/apa_formatting_and_style_guide/general_format.html) (OWL) https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/apa_formatting_and_style_guide/general_format.html

Academic Policies and Procedures Structure at Helena College

Academic and Student Conduct

Academic and student conduct issues are addressed in the current [Helena College catalog](#) and [Student Code of Conduct](#) Handbook (https://helenacollege.edu/student_services/docs/student-code-of-conduct-ay24.pdf). Topics discussed include, but are not limited to:

- Orientation
- Student Code of Conduct
- Academic Integrity and Dishonesty
- Student Due Process
- Confidentiality
- Drug and Alcohol Use and Abuse
- Fees/financial aid policies and procedures

Please review these and other academic policies in the Helena College Student Handbook.

Student Conduct and Honor Code

Students must follow the rules, regulations, and policies as outlined in the Student Handbook and Nursing Program policies with respect to their conduct. Refer to the [Helena College catalog](https://helenacollege.edu/catalog/) (<https://helenacollege.edu/catalog/>) and the nursing student handbook for expected standards of behavior. Disruptive behavior, unsafe actions, and/or academic dishonesty will not be tolerated and can lead to expulsion from class and/or clinicals. **Helena College and Helena College Nursing Department have a zero-tolerance policy for behavior that can result in harm (physical or emotional).**

Academic Dishonesty Definition/Policy Statement

Helena College expects its students to adhere to a high standard of academic integrity. It is a violation of academic integrity standards and the student code of conduct to present the ideas, designs, works, or words of another person as one's own efforts, or to permit another person to do so. The following guidelines are intended to clarify these issues for students, faculty, and administration.

The College will regard the following acts as violations of academic integrity, constituting academic dishonesty. Although the list and descriptions are not intended to be exhaustive of all types or instances of academic dishonesty, they are presented as examples of behavior to avoid. It is explicitly the student's responsibility to avoid academic dishonesty of all kinds, and each student is required to seek guidance in advance of taking any questionable action, including but not limited to those enumerated below.

Plagiarism

A student will be considered in violation of standards for academic integrity if they submit an assignment in any form (written, oral, graphic, or computer-generated, etc.) that consists wholly or partially of the words, work, or ideas of another individual without giving the original author proper credit. A similar violation would occur in cases where a student submits a paper or other project/assignment for one course that was originally created for another course, even if that student was the originator of the paper/project/assignment in the first instance. Similarly, using facts, figures, graphs, charts, or information without acknowledging the source constitutes plagiarism, which may occur verbally, in written form, through computer programs and files, research methods, designs, particular distinctive words or phrases, ideas, and images or any other information that was created by another person without acknowledgment of that person's role in its creation. Inadvertent or unintentional misuse or appropriation of another's work (such as relying heavily on source material that is not expressly acknowledged) is still considered plagiarism.

Copying/Cheating

A student will be considered in violation of academic integrity standards if they gain, or attempt to gain, credit for work by dishonest or deceptive means. Examples include the use of crib notes, cheat sheets, books, or any other material or electronic device as aids in an examination or any other graded exercise unless the instructor of the class has given explicit permission to use such materials. Collaboration with another student on an examination or other graded exercise, unless the instructor has given permission, also constitutes copying. It is the policy of the College to prohibit phones, smartwatches, and other similar devices during examinations. Before administering an examination, instructors will require all such devices to be turned off and stored in an inaccessible place. Failure to comply with this policy will constitute a violation of the academic integrity policy. If a student is found in possession of such a device during an examination, they will be assigned a score of 0 for the examination. Further examples include: copying assignments from another source (classmate, etc.); working with others on exams or homework that is not explicitly permitted by the instructor to be collaborative; looking at another student's paper or screen during an exam or assignment; disclosing exam content to others during an exam, or after completion of an exam, including allowing such information to be disclosed to you; and/or attempting to or allowing another person to complete assignments for another person (such as in an online course). The above examples are meant to illustrate violations of the principle of academic integrity and are not intended to be all-inclusive.

Additional instances of dishonesty that are not explicitly identified in the above list will nevertheless be treated as violations.

Contributing to Academic Dishonesty

A student will be considered in violation of academic integrity standards if they willfully assist another student in an act of academic dishonesty.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Generated Work

If the faculty suspects that the submitted work was not your own or that AI tools were extensively utilized, the student will be asked to explain the work in detail. If the student is not able to display a reasonable understanding of the submitted work, it will constitute a violation of academic integrity.

Nursing Department AI Statement

Artificial Intelligence (AI) can be used as a tool to seek clarification or to generate ideas; however, it is not a replacement for critical thinking and expanding of ideas. Students should be able to discuss details and elaborate on ideas within their assignment when prompted. Students who are unable to do so or who are suspected of using AI extensively within an assignment will be required to complete the assignment again. The attempt must be hand-written under supervision to ensure that academic integrity is being maintained. Students will receive a score based on the re-attempt of the assignment, which may include deductions for extensive AI use on the first attempt, as determined by the course instructor and assignment rubric.

Academic Dishonesty Violations

Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Academic sanctions for a first violation are at the discretion of the instructor and range from a failing grade for the assignment to a failing grade in the course in which the academic dishonesty occurs. When a faculty member assigns a failing grade based on academic dishonesty, they shall notify the affected student(s) and the appropriate Division Director in writing of the violation and provide all supporting documentation to the Division Director. A record of the infraction will be kept on file in the office of the Division Director, although no further official action will be taken unless/until a second infraction is reported. In cases of repeated offenses, the Executive Director of Compliance and Financial Aid will be notified and will administer a range of disciplinary sanctions up to and including expulsion from the College. Students retain their right to due process and may refer to the Student Handbook or the Executive Director of Compliance and Financial Aid regarding any disciplinary sanctions.

Accessibility and Accommodations

In the event you encounter any barrier(s) to full participation in this course due to the impact of a disability, please contact the Accessibility Services Office. The Accessibility coordinator can meet with you to discuss the barriers you are experiencing and explain the eligibility process for establishing academic accommodations. If you have already been approved for accommodations through the Accessibility Office, please schedule an appointment with your instructor or provide copies of the accommodations so we can implement your accommodations. These accommodations need to be presented to the instructor at least a day in advance of any test or exam in which the accommodated services will be used to allow appropriate arrangements to be made.

Accessibility Services Office
(406) 447-6911

hcdr@helenacollege.edu

Office location: East End Advising-Donaldson Campus Room 119

Only students registered with the Accessibility Office are permitted accommodations. All information will be kept confidential. Students who receive accommodations must arrange times for tests with the [testing center](mailto:testingcenter@helenacollege.edu) (testingcenter@helenacollege.edu) or by calling 406-447-6946.

Informational Links

Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN)

The ACEN website can be found at <https://www.acenursing.org/>

American Nurses Association Code of Ethics for Nurses

The American Nurses Association Code of Ethics for Nurses with interpretive guidelines is found at <https://www.nursingworld.org/coe-view-only>

Montana State Board of Nursing

The MT State Board of Nursing website is found at <https://boards.bsd.dli.mt.gov/nursing/>

This website has information on Montana Statutes, Administrative Rules and Regulations, Scope of Practice, and information about licensure.

National Council State Boards of Nursing

The NCSBN NCLEX website is found at <https://www.nclex.com/>

Appendix A

Signature Sheets

These signature sheets must be read, signed, and returned to the Director of Nursing by the end of the first week of the semester.

The following forms are included in the Handbook and given to the students during Nursing Orientation. Students are given a hard copy of the Handbook at Orientation. Electronic copies of the Handbook are posted on the Nursing Information page of Canvas and on the Nursing Program website.

HELENA COLLEGE UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA

LATEX ALLERGY STATEMENT

Today, many healthcare facilities minimize the use of latex as much as possible. At HC we make every attempt to avoid latex in the clinical lab, as well. However, inadvertent exposure to latex may still be encountered in products such as stethoscope tubing, injectable medications, and vials on-site, and in your clinical rotation.

For your protection during the Nursing Program, as well as during your healthcare career, a better understanding of your potential for latex allergy is recommended. Additionally, you may already have some form of latex allergy if you react after eating certain foods (avocados, bananas, tomatoes, etc.) or after exposure to latex-containing products (poinsettia, balloons, band-aids/tape, spandex, elastic bandages, etc.).

If you have any concerns about your allergic status regarding latex, we advise you to speak with your primary care doctor/provider about a blood test called a Latex RAST. This test is available to determine if you have a type I latex allergy. The result of this blood test, along with the assessment by your health care provider, can help you determine what, if any, risk your exposure to latex carries.

Please initial

_____ I have read the above document regarding latex allergy. I am aware that I may obtain additional blood testing and evaluation by my healthcare provider if I have any concerns.

Please select one of the following:

_____ I elect to have additional follow-up regarding potential latex allergy and will provide the Nursing Program with this information for my protection in clinical and lab settings.

_____ I elect not to have additional testing or evaluation regarding potential latex allergy. I understand that not having this information may be detrimental to my health.

Print Name _____

Student Signature _____ Date: _____

HELENA COLLEGE UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA
STATEMENT OF INFORMED CONSENT FOR PREVENTION OF
COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

Please place an "X" by each statement you agree to:

_____ I understand that HC Nursing programs involve the study and care of people throughout the lifespan and that these people may be well or ill. By participating in caregiving activities, I may be exposed to infectious diseases, such as Hepatitis B, Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS), Influenza, COVID-19, and other infectious and/or communicable diseases.

_____ I agree to participate in HBV/HIV education experiences as required by HC Nursing Programs and CDC and OSHA guidelines. I understand that testing, diagnosis, and treatment of any infectious and/or communicable disease, including those contracted while acting as a caregiver in my clinical experiences with HC, will be my financial responsibility. I understand that health insurance is required.

_____ I will receive the Hepatitis B vaccine and /or demonstrate proof of immunity before beginning my clinical experience with direct client/patient care. Should I refuse to be immunized, I will sign a refusal to consent form.

_____ In the event I am exposed to blood while giving client care, I agree to follow the **HC Accidental Exposure Policy and Protocol** established by the institution and in accordance with the healthcare facility's Exposure Control Plan. I understand that this generally involves one year of blood testing and professional counseling for myself and/or significant others. I understand and acknowledge that there is no known cure for AIDS currently. I will receive a referral to community health resources for free blood testing to detect HIV upon request.

_____ I am aware that the Privacy Act provides for confidentiality on any issue related to my health status. All information will be kept in strict confidence by the Nursing Department and used to provide counseling, health information, and referrals.

_____ If I am uncomfortable with the idea of caring for patients with infectious and/or communicable diseases. I will discuss my concerns with the nursing faculty at Helena College. I understand that Rules 24.159.1005 (n) of the Statutes and Rules of the Montana State Board of Nursing states that "...as a member of the nursing profession, the registered nurse and practical nurse shall...conduct practice without discrimination on the basis of age, race, sex, sexual preference, national origin, or handicap. (The Americans with Disabilities Act, 1992, establishes communicable disease, including AIDS, as a handicap /disability).

_____ It is recommended that I inform faculty of changes in my health status, such as pregnancy or contraction of a communicable and/or infectious disease. I have been informed and understand that an altered state of my health, such as being infected with HIV, may increase my health risk in relation to caregiving activities for patients with bacterial and viral diseases. I understand that I should seek sound medical advice for changes in my health status, as discussed in this paragraph.

I have read this document. I fully understand the learning opportunities, potential risks, and safeguard options that are involved in my role as a nursing student at HC. I consent to follow the policies and procedures as explained herein.

Print Name _____

Student Signature _____ Date: _____

HELENA COLLEGE UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA

BLOODBORNE PATHOGEN STUDENT POLICY

Purpose

Students in any academic, research, or occupational program at HC who are at risk for bloodborne pathogen exposure are required to present documentation of serologic evidence of immunity to Hepatitis B (HBV), either by vaccination or previous infection. Students who cannot meet this requirement for legitimate religious or medical reasons must sign a waiver prior to the student's first potential exposure to human blood or other potentially infectious materials. Records of the waiver shall be kept in the student's files within the department that requires the immunization.

Procedure

Students who are unable to meet the requirements of documentation of immunity for religious or medical reasons must provide written documentation of the reasons that preclude immunization.

Effective June 1999, students are required to present the following information prior to admittance into the nursing program before their first potential exposure to human blood or other potentially infectious materials. Students will not be allowed in areas or settings that may present their first potential exposure to human blood or other potentially infectious materials without this documentation.

1. Documentation of serologic immunity; or
2. Documentation of immunization series; or
3. Signed waiver of exemption from immunization requirements.

Exposures

1. If a student has an exposure (i.e., eye, mouth, mucous membrane, non-intact skin, or parenteral contact with blood or potentially infectious materials) in a setting sponsored by HC, the student must follow the policy of the facility where they are exposed. The student is responsible for the cost of post-exposure testing. Students can go to the County Health Department or a private physician for testing and counseling. Records of the exposure and follow-up shall be kept in a confidential file in the appropriate program.
2. If a student has an exposure, the student must report it immediately to the instructor or supervisor. A Student Exposure Incident Form must be completed by the student, signed by the student and instructor or supervisor, and sent to the HR Office.
3. The faculty or clinical instructor must also complete a General accident/ incident report in Maxient <https://cm.maxient.com/reporting.php?HelenaCollege>

Training

Student training shall be done prior to the student's first potential exposure to bloodborne pathogens. The training shall include the requirements of the Bloodborne Pathogen Standard, universal precautions, and the HC policy. The training may be incorporated into class materials in NRSG 232 Foundations of Nursing.

Your signature below indicates that you have read and understand the "Bloodborne Pathogen Student Policy" and will adhere to it as outlined above.

Print Name _____

Student Signature _____ Date: _____

HELENA COLLEGE UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA
STUDENT EXPOSURE INCIDENT FORM

Student Name:	
Student ID:	Date of Incident:
Department/Building:	Date Reported:
Type of Exposure:	
<div style="display: flex; flex-direction: column; gap: 10px;"><div><input type="checkbox"/> Human bite</div><div><input type="checkbox"/> Blood/Body fluid splash</div><div><input type="checkbox"/> Open wound, scratch, or abrasion contaminated with blood/body fluid/urine/stool</div><div><input type="checkbox"/> Puncture or cut from instrument set, lancet, or other sharp object</div><div><input type="checkbox"/> Needle stick following venipuncture</div><div><input type="checkbox"/> Needle stick from IVP or VIPB</div><div><input type="checkbox"/> Needle stick following injection</div><div><input type="checkbox"/> Other (Describe)</div></div>	
Describe the exposure incident in detail:	
What actions were taken immediately following the incident?	

What precautions were in use at the time of incident? Check all that apply. <input type="checkbox"/> Gloves <input type="checkbox"/> Gown/Apron <input type="checkbox"/> Mask <input type="checkbox"/> Eyewear <input type="checkbox"/> CPR shield <input type="checkbox"/> None <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify):	
Date(s) of HBV vaccination(s):	
Student Signature:	Date:
Instructor/Supervisor Signature:	Date:
Signature of person preparing report (if other than student):	
FOLLOW-UP	DATE
<input type="checkbox"/> Student referred to physician of choice <input type="checkbox"/> Seen by Physician: <input type="checkbox"/> Office <input type="checkbox"/> ER <input type="checkbox"/> County Health <input type="checkbox"/> Declined to be seen by physician Other comments:	

STATEMENT OF FUNCTIONAL ABILITIES

HC Nursing Department requires each student to be able to regularly perform the following activities:

1. Stand for long periods of time
2. Work at a fast pace for long periods of time
3. Lift heavy objects (25 pounds or more) three or more times a day
4. Speak clearly and distinctly
5. Respond appropriately to stressful situations (physically, emotionally, and mentally), including the ability to perform activities in the presence of distractions.
6. Communicate effectively with patients, patients' families, physicians, and staff
7. Hear vital signs with a stethoscope to assess blood pressure, heart rate, and lung, vascular, and abdominal sounds; hear the telephone
8. Hear the patient calling for help
9. Hear beepers, alarms, etc., requiring quick responses
10. Read very fine or small print on medication containers, and read physician's orders
11. See nurse call/emergency light
12. Visually assess the patient appropriately
13. Read monitors and other equipment
14. Demonstrate manual dexterity to don sterile gloves and gown
15. Demonstrate manual dexterity to prepare medications aseptically (i.e., IV, PO, and IM)
16. Demonstrate manual dexterity using sterile technique (i.e., insert catheters, IV needles, etc.)
17. Demonstrate the ability to utilize equipment needed to carryout patient care
18. Demonstrate the ability to move in small spaces in an emergency situation

Your signature below indicates that you have read and understand the "Functional Abilities" requirements and can perform them unless otherwise indicated.

Print Name _____

Student Signature _____ Date: _____

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF REQUIREMENTS FOR PERSONAL EFFORT AND COMMITMENT FOR SUCCESS

Helena College's Nursing Program, like most nursing programs, requires a substantial time commitment to complete the rigorous program requirements in the classroom, nursing skills lab, and clinical settings. Student success is dependent upon a collaborative partnership between students and faculty. The Nursing faculty view learning as an interactive student-centered process with faculty facilitating learning. The faculty is committed to assisting you to succeed in this program. However, student learners must assume responsibility for their own learning and be actively engaged in shaping their learning. It is important that students understand program expectations:

1. Students are expected to devote a minimum study time of 2 hours per week for each credit enrolled. For example, a didactic course worth 3 credits would require a minimum of 6 hours of study time each week and a 1 credit lab, 2 hours each week minimum. It is important to note that most students spend more than the minimal study expectation.
2. While we understand your possible need to work to support yourself or your family, most students find it extremely difficult to work full time while in the nursing program. Clinical practicums are scheduled when facilities have available space and on days that HC has clinicals. These are subject to change with short notice. Students are expected to be available for the scheduled clinical hours. We strive to have clinicals on day shift, but clinical time may include evenings, weekends, or nights.
3. It is expected that students will attend all classes and clinicals. Missed clinical time may result in failure of courses and dismissal from the program. Please do not make vacation plans, family events, or appointments that affect class, lab, or clinical attendance. Absences are nearly impossible to make up due to the fast pace of material presented in class and the limited availability of clinical experiences.
4. Nursing school is different. In general, students find that even with the same effort, they may not achieve the grades they did in non-nursing courses. In the beginning, it is like learning a new language and being presented with comprehensive nursing concepts and principles, which may require more effort or a new way of studying on your part to learn and understand. While grades may have been the primary focus of prior courses, in Nursing, the focus is on learning and understanding the information to allow you to then apply what you learned to a patient situation. This focus provides the student with a foundation that helps them deliver safe and competent care to patients.
5. You are expected to arrive prepared for class, lab, or clinicals. This will include extensive reading, pre-clinical preparation, and other assignments prior to arriving to class/clinical.
6. Nursing exams are frequently structured like the nurse licensing exam (NCLEX). This will include questions that are designed to assess your ability to apply and analyze the material rather than simple knowledge and recall. These test questions require a higher order of thinking to answer correctly.
7. The Faculty will provide you with examples of learning and test taking strategies that may assist you in developing critical thinking skills needed for success in the course exams and the NCLEX licensure exam.

I acknowledge that I have read and understand the above statements, and I agree to organize my time and personal affairs to meet the commitment necessary to succeed.

Printed Name

Signature

Date



STUDENT STATEMENT OF RELEASE

I hereby authorize Helena College University of Montana, and the Montana University System, its agents, to release a copy of any/all of my required clinical documents, including, but not limited to immunization records, criminal background checks, and CPR certification to clinical site agencies from this time forward while I am in the clinical nursing program.

I understand that I must submit all required documentation before participating in any clinical experiences. ***I understand that I have the right to refuse to share my health information and background status with clinical agencies and that my refusal will make me ineligible for clinical placement.***

Please print your name here _____

Please sign your name here _____ Date: _____

Employer Contact Release Form

I hereby allow Helena College Department of Nursing to contact my employer for the purpose of assessing employer program satisfaction with graduates of Helena College Nursing for entry-level positions.

Please print your name here _____

Please sign your name here _____ Date _____



PHOTOGRAPHY RELEASE

To promote the successful nursing programs at Helena College UM, and to improve outside communications with potential students, healthcare partners, and other interested parties, the college uses photographs, video footage, and statements made of/by the student named below in presentations about our Nursing Program. All photos and video footage shall remain the sole property of the College.

I authorize Helena College UM, full and free use of photographs containing my image/likeness. I understand these images may be used for promotional, news, research, and/or educational purposes. I hereby release, discharge, and hold harmless Helena College and its agents from any and all claims, demands, or causes of action that I may hereafter have by reason of anything contained in the photographs.

I understand that no compensation will be made to me for this use. Helena College UM assumes no liability of any nature in connection with photography, filming, and/or interviewing.

I do further certify that I am either of legal age or possess full legal capacity to execute the foregoing authorization and release.

Please print your name here _____

Please sign your name here _____ Date _____



RECEIPT OF HANDBOOK

It is the responsibility of each student enrolled in the Nursing Program to read and adhere to all the information contained in this handbook, with special attention to:

- Academic and Student Conduct
- Academic Accommodations
- Nursing Course and Clinical Grades
- Attendance
- Student Responsibilities Relating to Professional Conduct
- Confidentiality
- Uniform Standards for Clinical Settings
- Latex Allergy Statement
- Statement of Informed Consent for Prevention of Communicable Diseases
- Bloodborne Pathogen Student Policy
- Student Exposure Incident Form
- Statement of Functional Abilities
- Professional Behavior Rubric
- Photo Release Form
- Student Statement of Release
- Employer Release Form

I have received the Registered Nurse Student Handbook, and I am familiar with ***ALL*** the information contained in the Handbook from the Helena College Nursing Program. ***I agree to adhere to all policies and processes outlined in these pages.***

Student initials _____

Student signature _____ Date _____

Director of Nursing signature _____ Date _____