

UNIVERSITY OF HARTFORD

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION, NURSING AND HEALTH PROFESSIONS

Student Substance Abuse and Personal Conduct Policy

Purpose

The University of Hartford, College of Education, Nursing and Health Professions (the “College”) is committed to maintaining a safe, healthy and productive environment for its students, staff, and faculty. Health care providers and teachers are entrusted with the safety and welfare of others and operate in settings that require the exercise of good judgment and ethical behavior. Thus, an assessment of students’ suitability to function in such a setting is imperative to promote the highest level of integrity.

Students must consent to and satisfactorily complete a background check in order to participate in the clinical aspects of the programs as required by our affiliating clinical agencies. Approved participation in clinical experiences will not be final until the completion of the background check(s) with results deemed as satisfactory. Approval may be denied or rescinded based on a review of the background check.

In addition, the College recognizes the importance of educating its students about the problems of substance abuse and the serious health risks it may cause. Substance abuse may significantly impact the ability of future healthcare providers and teachers to effectively function in the professional workplace. Several affiliated agencies have mandated that students be screened for drugs before participating in clinical experiences in their facility. Recognizing that substance abuse is both a disease and a professional hazard, the College has incorporated substance abuse topical content areas into its curriculum. The College has likewise established this substance abuse policy.

Policy

This policy applies to all students who have matriculated into the College. Students must consent, submit to, and satisfactorily complete a criminal background check and drug screening as a condition of participation in clinical experiences. Eligibility for participation in clinical experiences will not be final until the completion of the criminal background check and drug screening (as required) with results deemed acceptable to the applicable clinical affiliates of the program/College. Failure of any portion of a program's required checks may be the basis for barring the student from participation in that program, depending on the findings and based upon the current program's requirements. The University reserves the right to request another background check and/or drug test at any point in a student’s program.

Use of alcohol, marijuana, or any unlawful possession, manufacture, distribution, diversion, or improper use of any substances by any student in the College may result in removal from clinical, classroom or lab. Students must also comply with all local, state, or federal laws and regulations controlling the possession, manufacture, use, or distribution of controlled or illegal substances and alcohol. Undergraduate students must also adhere to *The Alcohol and Drug Policy* found in the University of Hartford's Drug Free Schools and Communities Act Notification found at: www.hartford.edu/student-life/health-wellness/public

There are circumstances in which students may need to take over the counter or prescribed medications that have the potential to impair their performance or personal behavior. As such, all students are responsible for being aware of the effect these medications may have on performance and must notify an appropriate faculty member within 72 hours prior to clinical attendance or drug testing if they have used any medication that could impair performance or has the potential to influence a drug screen.

Failure or refusal to comply with the substance abuse policy may be grounds for disciplinary action, including disqualification from clinical participation. Any attempt to delay, hinder, or tamper with any testing or to alter the results of testing will be considered a refusal to comply with this policy. In addition, failure or refusal to comply with any aspect of the substance abuse policy may be reported to the appropriate Dean and/or Dean of Students (undergraduate) or her/his designee for possible disciplinary action in accordance with the University's Policy.

Procedures

I. Background Checks

The College will designate an approved company to conduct the background checks and issue reports directly to the College. Results from a company other than those designated will not be accepted. Students and applicants who have received an offer of admission must contact a designated company and comply with its instructions in authorizing and obtaining a background check. Students and applicants who have received an offer of admission are responsible for payment of any fees charged by a designated company to provide the background check service.

Background checks include the following and cover at least the past seven years:

- Criminal history search, including convictions, deferred adjudications or judgments, and pending criminal charges involving felonies, Class A, Class B, and Class C violations
- Social Security Number verification
- Violent Sexual Offender and Predator Registry search
- Office of the Inspector General (OIG) List of Excluded Individuals/Entities
- General Services Administration (GSA) List of Parties Excluded from Federal Programs
- U.S. Treasury Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC), List of Specially Designated Nationals (SDN)
- Applicable State Exclusion List

In order to qualify for clinical participation, students must complete the required background check screening prior to the start of clinical as designated by the program. The background check

report will be submitted to the College for its review. If the report contains negative findings, a review committee may request that the applicant submit additional information relating to the negative finding such as a written explanation, court documents, and/or police reports. The committee will review all information available to it and determine appropriate action. Students have the right to review the information reported by the designated company for accuracy and completeness and to request that the designated company verify that the background information provided is correct. Prior to making a final determination that will adversely affect the student, the College will provide students a copy of or access to the background check report issued by the designated company, and inform them of their rights, how to contact the designated company to challenge the accuracy of the report and that the designated company was not involved in any decisions made by the College/Program.

II. Pre-Clinical Drug Screening

Most of our affiliated agencies have mandated that students be screened for drugs before beginning clinical experiences in their facility. The required panel urine screen for drugs of abuse typically includes the following: Amphetamine (AMP), Barbiturates (BAR), Benzodiazepines (BZO), Cocaine (COC), Marijuana (THC), Methamphetamine (MET), Methadone (MTD), Opiates (OPI), Oxycodone (OXY), Phencyclidine (PCP), and Ecstasy (MDMA).

All students assigned to clinical and/or observational experiences are subject to compliance with this policy. Pre-clinical drug screening will be conducted through a contractual agreement between CastleBranch and the laboratory.

Students will be provided with clear instructions and dates for the pre-clinical drug screen. The screening will typically occur before the start of a clinical experience; specific time frames may be dictated by the clinical agency. A student may opt to refuse drug screening; however, refusal to meet this requirement will prevent the student from fulfilling course requirements, resulting in course failure.

III. Screening for Reasonable Suspicion of Drug/Alcohol Use

During participation in a clinical experience, a student may be required to undergo drug or alcohol testing for cause when demonstrating behavioral changes that are suspected to be related to drugs or alcohol. The Faculty Course Coordinator in consultation with relevant faculty will complete the *Faculty Report of Reasonable Suspicion of Drug/Alcohol* (Appendix A). The faculty member who observes these changes must contact the Program Director/Department Chair. The decision to refer a student for drug testing will be made based on, but not limited to:

- a. Observable phenomena such as direct observation of drug use and or physical symptoms or manifestations of being under the influence of a drug.
- b. Erratic behavior, slurred speech, staggering gait, flushed face, dilated/pinpoint pupils, wide mood swings, and deterioration of work performance.

A student who is referred for drug testing will be issued a *Student Drug Testing Notification for Reasonable Suspicion of Drug/Alcohol Use Form* to complete. (Appendix B). All costs associated with this screening are the responsibility of the student.

Any student arrested or convicted of violating any federal, state, or local law pertaining to the manufacture, possession, sale, use, or distribution of a drug or alcohol or misuse of prescribed medications must report this event. The event should be reported to the Program Director/Department Chair and the Dean of the College of Nursing, Education and Health Sciences within three days of the event and prior to any clinical contact with patients, families, and other members of the affiliated agencies.

IV. III. Reporting

A faculty or staff member who suspects possible substance abuse by a student must report the suspicious behavior to the Program Director/Department Chair.

V. Drug Testing Procedure

Drug and alcohol testing required by the College will be conducted utilizing the following measures:

- A. The student must be tested at the designated laboratory approved by the College.
- B. The student must fully comply with the testing facility's methods and procedures for collecting samples.
- C. The test shall screen for the use of the controlled substances (10-11 panel drug screen). The student will disclose any prescribed or over-the-counter medications, as well as any dietary habits that could modify testing results. If the results of a student's test confirms the presence of a prescribed drug, the student will be required to obtain a written statement from the prescribing physician stating that the drug level is within prescribed limits and that the level does not indicate abuse.
- D. Only those students with a positive drug test will be notified. Positive test results will be communicated to the student through the University email system.
- E. If the accuracy of a positive test is disputed by the student, the student may request a retesting of samples by the facility; however, the cost of the additional testing would be the responsibility of the student. Testing done outside the appropriate window of time will not be considered valid.
- F. Substance abuse is verified if either: 1) the positive test result is not disputed; or 2) if the student-requested retest is positive
- G. If the test is inconclusive, the screening will be treated as positive until definitive analysis by alternate testing is accomplished. During this time the student will be not permitted to participate in the clinical experience, but may be allowed to attend on-campus classes.
- H. The testing facility will make a final report of the test results (positive, negative, or inconclusive) to the appropriate College designee. A student who is required to and submits to drug and alcohol screening will be expected to authorize the release of the results to the Program Director/Department Chair.

All interim actions, including requiring the student to undergo drug or alcohol testing, to refrain participating in clinical experiences, or to refrain from attending classes will be determined by the Program Director/Department Chair.

In drug or alcohol testing for cause cases, the cost of any required drug or alcohol testing will be borne by the student at a facility chosen by the College. A student who refuses to submit to testing will be regarded as having voluntarily relinquished his/her clinical responsibilities. Any attempt to delay, hinder, or tamper with any testing or to alter the results of testing will be considered a refusal to submit to testing and may result in an inference of impairment and/or a violation of this policy.

Confidentiality: Background check reports, drug test results and other submitted information are confidential and may only be reviewed by College officials and affiliated clinical facilities in accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Upon written request, students will be provided a copy of test results. All submitted information will be maintained in accordance with the University's record retention policies.

VI. Review by Academic Standings Committee

The College is committed to a drug-free program. Once evidence has been gathered documenting the use or suspected use of controlled substances and/or impairment, the student's case will be discussed at a meeting of the Academic Standings Committee. The Committee will consider all evidence to determine next steps including removal from clinical, leave of absence, and/or dismissal from the program. A student who is suspected of violating this policy may submit written information to the Committee for their review.

VII. Voluntary Self-Disclosure

Students who voluntarily self-disclose a substance or alcohol abuse problem to a faculty member, academic advisor, Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) staff member, or the Program Director/Department Chair, prior to a positive drug/alcohol test result, and who are willing to enter in and complete an appropriate program of treatment, may be granted a medical leave of absence while she/he undergoes treatment. The student, in consultation with her/his health care provider and providers from CAPS, will identify and enter a treatment program. The student must sign appropriate University forms providing CAPS permission to communicate the student's recovery status.

VIII. Treatment and Academic Plan

If a positive drug test is confirmed, the student will immediately be removed from all clinical affiliations and will be required to begin treatment if appropriate. The student may remain in all theory and designated classes. It is possible that this situation could have implications for a student's financial aid. The referral of a student for evaluation and/or treatment relating to alcohol/substance abuse and related issues is undertaken out of an intense concern for the overall health and welfare of our students and the patients whose welfare they are responsible for.

Evaluation and treatment relating to possible alcohol/chemical dependency should not be construed as a punitive action. Treatment recommendations may involve but are not limited to one or more of the following:

1. Personal counseling provided through CAPS, and/or referral to other resources outside the University when appropriate.
2. Referral for treatment/counseling and aftercare planning to a community- based intensive outpatient program.
3. Referral for treatment and aftercare planning to a community-based inpatient treatment facility. Typically these programs involve intensive individual and group counseling in a residential setting. Additionally, every effort is made to include a component of family counseling in the overall treatment program.
4. Students are financially responsible for their treatment.

IX. Re-admittance to Clinical Courses and accompanying Content Course

1. The student may be subject to requests for random testing at any time while continuing in theory courses and must provide a negative follow-up drug test before re-admittance to a clinical course. Follow up testing costs are the responsibility of the student.
2. If the student has maintained negative random and pre-clinical drug tests, re-admittance to a clinical course and its accompanying content course may occur the next semester the course is offered.

Appendix A

College of Education, Nursing and Health Professions

Faculty Report of Reasonable Suspicion of Drug/Alcohol Abuse

Contact the Program Director immediately to report a suspicion of drug or alcohol use. Please use the space below to provide a detailed description of the student's behavior. All information is to be kept confidential. Please return the form in a sealed envelope to the Program Director within 24 hours.

Name of Student _____ Date of Incident _____

Time of Incident _____ Location of Incident _____

Detailed description of suspicion: include any behavioral, visual, olfactory, or auditory observations.

___Speech (normal, incoherent, confused, change in speech, slurred, rambling, shouting, slow, using profanity.)

___Coordination (normal, swaying, staggering, lack of coordination, grasping for support)

___Performance (unsafe practices, unsatisfactory work.)

___Alertness (change in alertness, sleepy, confused.)

___Demeanor (change in personality, fighting, excited, combative, aggressive, violent, argumentative, indifferent, threatening, antagonistic.)

___Eyes (bloodshot, dilated.) ___Clothing (dirty, disheveled.)

___Odor of alcohol on breath ___Other observed actions or behaviors

___List complaints of student behavior from personnel or other students.

___List unexplained absences or tardiness.

Did the student verbally admit to use of drugs/alcohol? ___No___Yes

Comments: _____

Were drugs/alcohol discovered on the person? ___No___Yes

Comments: _____

Did another faculty member or healthcare provider observe the student's changed behavior? If so, please have the individual document his/her observations and sign below. All discussions are held confidential to all signing parties.

Faculty Member Signature: _____ Date : _____

Other Professional Witness: _____ Date: _____

Print Name and Role _____

Comments:

Appendix B

College of Education, Nursing and Health Professions

Student Drug Testing Notification Form for Reasonable Suspicion of Drug/Alcohol Use

Student Name: _____

Student ID: _____ Telephone Number _____

Notification Date and Time: _____

I, the undersigned acknowledge being notified to appear for drug testing and have been notified to report to the drug testing station at:

Location and time _____ Date _____

I will be prepared to provide an adequate specimen and will not **overhydrate** (drink excessive amounts of water or other fluids).

I understand that I may have a witness accompany me to the drug testing site.

By signing, I have been notified of my selection for drug testing, and am aware of what is expected of me in preparation for this drug testing procedure. I understand that falsification of the substance screening may result in immediate dismissal of the nursing program. I understand that I am responsible for any incurred costs related to this screening

Student's Signature: _____

Report to the test site with picture identification- **Do not drink too many fluids.**

New: Date _____

In accordance with Student Substance Abuse Policy