Substance Abuse

Northeast State’s clinical affiliates and industry partners may require criminal background checks and/or drug testing for all students participating in clinical experiences at their respective sites. Based on the results of these checks, the clinical facility, not Northeast State, will have the sole discretion to determine whether to approve a student to participate in a clinical at their facility. A clinical affiliate or industry partner’s decision to deny a student a clinical experience at a site or the subsequent removal of a student from a clinical experience at a site based on the results of a criminal background check or drug test may negatively affect a student’s ability to complete academic program requirements. To obtain specific instructions for completing the criminal background check and/or drug test, please contact the appropriate academic dean for information.

Nursing Program Substance Abuse Policy (R0711)

Tennessee Board of Regents nursing programs must maintain a safe, efficient academic environment for students and a safe and effective care for students and must provide for the safe and effective care of clients while students are in the client-care setting. The presence or use of substances, lawful or otherwise, which interferes with the judgment or motor coordination of nursing students in either environmental setting, poses an unacceptable risk for clients, colleagues, the institution, and clinical agencies. Therefore, the unlawful use, possession, distribution, sale or manufacture, of alcoholic beverages, any drug or controlled substances (including stimulant, depressant, narcotic, hallucinogenic drug or substance, or marijuana), being under the influence of any drug or controlled substance, or the misuse of legally prescribed or “over-the-counter” drugs or public intoxication on property owned or controlled by the institution; at an affiliated clinical site or in violation of any term of the NeSCC Drug-Free Campus/Workplace Policy or the General regulations on Student Conduct and Disciplinary Sanctions in the NeSCC Online Catalog/Student Handbook while engaged in any clinical experience poses an unacceptable risk for clients, colleagues, the institution, and the clinical agency and is strictly prohibited.

Students enrolled in nursing postsecondary educational programs have placed themselves into a relationship where there is a special concern relative to the possession or use of drugs, alcohol or controlled substances.

If a student in a Nursing program appears to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs, functioning in any impaired manner, exhibiting inappropriate behavior in the classroom or clinical, or demonstrating any unprofessional conduct or negligence, the following shall be implemented:

1. The faculty or clinical affiliate representative responsible for that student, using professional judgment, will remove the student from their current environment.
   a. The time required of the student to be away from clinical rotation I order to undergo required procedures will be considered and evaluated on an individual basis.
   b. The absenteeism policy will be implemented.

2. The faculty or clinical affiliate representative responsible for that student shall report the alleged violation immediately to the dean of Nursing, who will then report to the Vice President of Student Affairs.

3. The faculty and/or clinical affiliate representative responsible for that student will document the circumstances.

4. The dean of Nursing or dean’s designee will meet with the student in order to
   a. provide the documented information to the student in order to give the student an opportunity to respond verbally and/or in writing to such charges, and to
   b. determine if there is a reasonable suspicion of the student being under the influence.

5. Drug and Alcohol testing may be requested by a clinical affiliate or the Office of Student Affairs may require testing based on reasonable suspicion.
   a. The drug and alcohol test will be accomplished through a breathalyzer or blood/urine laboratory test, at the option of the institution. Students will be assessed the cost of any such
required laboratory testing. The testing will be analyzed by the agency selected by the institution.

i. Due to the safety and security of clients, colleague, clinical agencies, students and the sensitive nature of nursing programs, it is not discriminatory to require drug testing. Drug and Alcohol testing may be requested. Refusal could subject the student to dismissal from the nursing program.

b. When testing reveals a positive result, the student will be referred to the Tennessee Professional assistance Program (TNPaP).

c. For students allowed to continue in the nursing program, continuation will be contingent on documented compliance with the rehabilitation plan established and monitored by TNPaP.

d. For students not allowed to continue in the nursing program, a plan for rehabilitation will be devised by TNPaP. The student must assume responsibility for compliance with this plan before request for readmission will be considered. Written verification of health status permitting the student to return may be required. Failure of the student to comply with the rehabilitation plan will impede readmission.

Graduates can apply for licensure at the appropriate time if they are in compliance with the TNPaP contract.