

Promoting Safe Learning Environments for Students	 SCHOOL OF NURSING UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA Driven to Discover®
	Policy Owner: School of Nursing Executive Council Policy Contact: Associate Dean for Academic Programs

Policy Statement

The University of Minnesota recognizes its responsibility to its students, faculty, staff, preceptors, and community to maintain the highest ethical standards. As part of this obligation, the University of Minnesota School of Nursing believes faculty, staff, students, and preceptors are responsible for ensuring a safe, respectful and supportive learning environment for students; free of actions and behaviors that are considered as mistreatment of another individual. Students should expect to learn in psychologically safe environments (e.g. classroom, simulation labs, practicum settings) that “ensures the creation of a climate where the student feels valued and free to express thoughts, perceptions and opinions without risking retribution, embarrassment, judgment or consequences to themselves or others”¹. All members of the community are expected to uphold the School’s commitment and action to diversity, equity and inclusion.

In keeping with this commitment, mistreatment of nursing students is unacceptable and is not tolerated.

Reason for Policy

This policy informs members of the School of Nursing community about what constitutes nursing student mistreatment and how community members should respond when encountering it. Specifically, it clarifies:

- What constitutes nursing student mistreatment.

¹ Chicca, J., & Shellenbarger, T. (2020). Fostering inclusive clinical learning environments using a psychological safety lens. 15, (p. 227)

- Ways members of the School of Nursing community (students, faculty, staff, preceptors) can identify mistreatment and the various options available for the reporting of mistreatment allegations, including the ways in which confidentiality is maintained.
- The responsibility of the School of Nursing to prevent retaliation against any persons who bring nursing student mistreatment complaints.
- The process by which allegations of mistreatment will be investigated in a prompt, thorough and impartial manner including how incidents that may overlap with how other policies are handled (e.g. sexual harassment, racial/ethnic harassment, etc.).

The ultimate intent is to prevent incidents of nursing student mistreatment through education, the development of community, and clear expectations regarding codes of conduct and professionalism for all members of our community. However, in the event that nursing student mistreatment occurs, the School of Nursing is committed to providing students with information about how to report mistreatment and to provide students with support and resources related to the mistreatment experienced. The goal is to address and resolve issues in a way that is fair to all, confidential for those involved, and transparent.

Examples of mistreatment include but are not limited to:

- Verbally abusing, belittling or humiliating a student or otherwise subjecting students to offensive remarks or names
- Intentionally singling out a student for arbitrary treatment, including unwarranted exclusion from learning opportunities, that could be perceived as punitive
- Exploiting students in any manner (e.g., asking students to perform personal errands)
- Threatening a lower or failing grade/evaluation to a student for inappropriate reasons
- Committing an act of physical abuse or violence of any kind, (e.g., throwing objects, aggressive violation of personal space)
- Making threats of physical violence or aggression to a student, their family or their ethnic/cultural group
- Taking credit for a student's work
- Engaging in sexual misconduct that violates the University of Minnesota's Board of Regents Policy on Sexual Harassment, Sexual Assault, Stalking and Relationship Violence
- Engaging in racial or ethnic harassment (see definition below from the Student Conduct Code)

- Engaging in discrimination that violates the University of Minnesota's Board of Regents Policy on [Equity, Diversity, Equal Opportunity, and](#) Equal Opportunity and/or the UMN Administrative [Policy on Discrimination](#).
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Procedures

I. Reporting Allegations of Mistreatment:

Each incident of alleged mistreatment is unique and determining the first course of action will depend on the student's decision of how best to address and/or report the incident. Students can choose to discuss the situation with a trusted individual in the school of nursing for guidance (e.g. faculty; student services personnel, director of IDE, school administrator). Such guidance can include options for formally reporting the alleged mistreatment. Those options available to students in making a report of the alleged mistreatment include the following:

A. Reporting to School of Nursing Officials

The nursing school maintains a Mistreatment Oversight Team, consisting of the Associate Dean for Academic Programs, Director of the Office of Student and Career Advancement Services, and the Director of Inclusivity, Diversity and Equity. The Oversight Team is responsible for handling reports from students of mistreatment as well as providing confidential consultation with students that wish to talk through their situation.

B. Online/Hotline Reporting

The University of Minnesota provides an online mechanism (UReport) for reporting violations of University policies. This system allows individuals (students, staff, faculty) to submit an allegation of mistreatment, including anonymously, and to track the status of their submission. An additional alternative for reporting is that individuals may contact the University's hotline by calling: 1-866-294-8680. Reporting is monitored by the University's Office of Institutional Compliance which then triages to the Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action (EOAA), the Office for Community Standards, the Mistreatment Oversight Team in the School of Nursing, and/or other appropriate University offices.

An inquiry or investigation will begin promptly for all incidents and follow-up will be provided in a timely manner to the reporting person. Submitters are provided a unique key allowing them to return for updates and to review any follow-up questions.

C. Equal Opportunity and Title IX (EOT)

Reports of discrimination or harassment engaged in by students, university employees or third parties based on protected identities, as well as reports of sexual misconduct impacting University community members can be made directly to EOT. University employees must report sexual misconduct that impacts University community members (including students) in accordance with the University's Sexual Harassment, Sexual Assault, Stalking and Relationship Violence policy.

D. Office for Community Standards (OCS)

Reports of discrimination or harassment engaged in by students based on protected identities, as well as reports of other forms of mistreatment or bullying (other than sexual misconduct) can be made directly to the Office for Community Standards.

II. Responding to, and Adjudicating Allegations of Mistreatment:

The School of Nursing takes every report of alleged mistreatment seriously and makes every effort to respond to reports in a responsible manner, prevent any risk of retaliation, and conduct investigations in a manner that upholds a duty of care to its community members, while adhering to University requirements for due process.

A. Sexual Misconduct:

Allegations of sexual misconduct, including sexual harassment, sexual assault, stalking and relationship violence that are submitted to the Mistreatment and Harassment Oversight Team or through UReport will be reported to the University's Office of Equal Opportunity and Title IX (EOT). EOT will determine how to address the report. More information about EOT's process can be found at: <https://eot.umn.edu/report-misconduct>

B. Other Forms of Misconduct:

The School of Nursing's Mistreatment Oversight Team will determine how to address other allegations of mistreatment. The Mistreatment Oversight Team may consult or work with other appropriate University offices depending on the nature of the allegations (e.g. EOT or OCS may be involved when allegations of discrimination or harassment are made; the School of Nursing Office of Human Resources may be consulted on allegations of student mistreatment by a faculty member).

III. Appeals:

Information about appeals processes are available from the University office addressing the misconduct allegation (e.g. EOT or OCS).

For internal investigations by the School of Nursing's Mistreatment Oversight Team, students can appeal findings in accordance with the Student Conduct Code Procedure: Twin Cities

IV. Confidentiality

The School of Nursing is committed to protecting a student's right to privacy. However, given the School of Nursing's and the University's obligation to responsive action, it may not be possible to guarantee confidentiality. Reporting individuals may choose to withdraw from the process. However, the School of Nursing reserves the right to continue its investigation where there may be potential violations of law or University policy, where the alleged incident is of sufficient seriousness that it raises concerns of imminent safety or security, compliance with Title IX mandated reporting, or resulting from a court order.

V. No Retaliation:

The University strictly prohibits retaliation against another community member for reporting suspected violations of compliance with the Board of Regents Code of Conduct, and all associated policies. Individuals who believe that retaliation is occurring or has occurred, as a result of reporting or otherwise expressing opposition to suspected or alleged mistreatment, can utilize the same reporting options outlined above. Reports of retaliation will be reviewed and investigated in the same manner in which other concerns of misconduct are handled and may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination or expulsion. The University also maintains a Retaliation Policy, which can be found at: <https://policy.umn.edu/operations/retaliation>.

VI. Distribution:

The University of Minnesota School of Nursing understands the importance awareness has on reducing incidences of mistreatment. In addition to any required university and/or School of Nursing training, it is also expected that this policy be shared, at a minimum, with all students (new, continuing, and visiting) and all faculty and preceptors.

Responsibilities

- *Mistreatment Oversight Team:* The School of Nursing's Mistreatment Oversight Team is the officially designated body for investigating and adjudicating allegations of mistreatment that do not meet EOAA criteria. All allegations of discrimination, harassment, nepotism, sexual misconduct and related retaliation will be referred to

EOAA for appropriate investigation. In addition, the Oversight Team will track all reports of mistreatment, whether reported through EOAA or internally, for purposes of identifying trends and developing effective educational programs to reduce incidents and improve the well-being of the school of nursing community.

- *EOT*: EOT addresses reports of discrimination, harassment, nepotism, sexual misconduct (including sexual harassment, sexual assault, stalking and relationship violence) and related retaliation through investigation, informal problem-solving, consultation, and education. EOT will triage complaints to the appropriate representatives of the School of Nursing's Mistreatment Oversight Team for allegations that are appropriate for internal School of Nursing review.
- *Office for Community Standards*: In its effort to improve the campus climate, the OCS upholds the Student Conduct Code. It accomplishes this by addressing reports of scholastic dishonesty, hazing, and other allegations of violations of the Student Conduct Code.
- *Community Members*: Members of the School of Nursing community (faculty, students, staff, preceptors) are expected to become familiar with the types of mistreatment, should refrain from engaging in such behavior themselves, and should communicate clear expectations for others with whom they interact. In addition, members of the School of Nursing community should report instances of mistreatment through the appropriate channels and encourage those who have witnessed or been subject to mistreatment to do the same.

Related Information

- a. To report suspected violations on-line: <https://compliance.umn.edu/report> or call University's hotline by calling: 1-866-294-8680
- b. To report suspected violations to the Mistreatment Oversight Team contact:

Kathryn Schwartz Eckhardt, Director Office of Student and Career Advancement
(schwa139@umn.edu)

Sue Forneris, Associate Dean for Academic Programs (sforneri@umn.edu)

Camille Brown, Director of Inclusivity, Diversity and Equity (brow1552@umn.edu)

Definitions

From the University of Minnesota Student Conduct Code.

Subd. 7. Discriminatory Harassment.

Discriminatory harassment means conduct that occurs under either of the following conditions:

- When it is stated or implied that a person needs to submit to, or participate in, unwelcome conduct based on a protected characteristic to maintain or advance in their employment, education, or participation in a University program or activity.
- When unwelcome conduct based on a protected characteristic is severe, persistent, or pervasive and (1) unreasonably interferes with an individual's employment, education, or participation in a University program or activity; (2) creates a work, employment, or other University environment that a reasonable person would find to be intimidating, hostile, or offensive; or (3) effectively denies an individual equal access to a University program or activity.

Resources

- The University of Minnesota Retaliation Policy:
<https://policy.umn.edu/operations/retaliation>
- Office of Equal Opportunity and Title IX: <https://eot.umn.edu/>
- Board of Regents Student Conduct Code:
https://regents.umn.edu/sites/regents.umn.edu/files/policies/Student_Conduct_Code.pdf
- Board of Regents Sexual Harassment, Sexual Assault, Stalking and Relationship Violence Policy available at:
https://regents.umn.edu/sites/regents.umn.edu/files/policies/Sexual_Harassment_Sexual_Assault_Stalking_Relationship_Violence.pdf
- Board of Regents Equity, Diversity, Equal Opportunity, and Affirmative Action Policy available at:
https://regents.umn.edu/sites/regents.umn.edu/files/policies/Equity_Diversity_EO_AA.pdf
- UMN Administrative [Policy on Discrimination](#)
- [Student Conflict Resolution Center](#)

- [Addressing Student Academic Complaints policy](#)
 - [Conflict Resolution Process for Student Academic Complaints](#)
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Revision History

Reviewed by:

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Approved by:

- Executive Council, 1/3/2023

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