



BSN Academic Regulation | Standard

Appropriate Use of Electronic Devices

Purpose

In the practice setting, it is essential that nursing students remain focused on patient care. In the classroom or laboratory setting, a positive learning environment requires students to be fully engaged in learning activities. The School of Nursing recognizes that, when used appropriately, electronic devices can contribute to positive outcomes with respects to teaching & learning. For example: patient safety, quality of patient care and/or individual organization and/or efficiency.

However, when used inappropriately, electronic devices may contribute negatively in the above noted areas, and as a result, may become an unnecessary distraction. It is for this reason that the use of personal electronic devices will be at the discretion of the teacher for the course being taught – practice, classroom and/or laboratory.

Definition

An electronic device includes any computer or wireless device that sends or receives a signal and has communication capabilities including, but not limited to: email, telephone, SMS, MMS, applications and/or internet browsing. Examples of electronic devices include, but are not limited to: Smartphones such as Blackberry®, Palm®, iPhone®, iPad®, Vocera, PDA, laptops, netbooks, and tablets.

Standard 1

Defining how electronic devices can be used in the classroom and/or practice setting

Directly related to student learning or patient care

When used in a manner that is directly related to student learning or patient care, electronic devices are generally acceptable. The use of electronic devices in the classroom and/or practice setting is at the discretion and permission of the teacher for the course. Additionally, there may be agency or facility policies that do not permit the use of electronic devices (i.e. Cardiac monitor or other medical device interference may result) and as such the most restrictive policy will be followed. Please ensure you are in compliance with facility and/or unit expectations/policies regarding using cell phones. (For example, observing a sign stating: "Use of Cell Phone Not Permitted". Examples of appropriate use of electronic devices in the following settings are provided below:

In the classroom

- Use of an electronic device to take notes on the current lesson.
- Use of an electronic device to search for information **directly related** to the topic (i.e. A teacher may pose a question during class time and students will utilize their electronic device to search the answer).

In the practice setting

- Use of an electronic device owned by the Health Authority (i.e. an IHA desktop computer) to research policies & procedures.
- Use of a handheld electronic device to access an electronic source such as a textbook or other application appropriate (i.e. in the procedure of medication administration, a student uses the device to research a medication in an electronic drug guide).

Indirectly or partially related to student learning or patient care

When used in a manner that is indirectly or partially related to student learning or patient care, electronic devices may or may not be acceptable in the classroom or practice setting. Again, the teacher will identify appropriateness and permit the use of electronic devices. Examples of this are provided below:

In the classroom

- Using a personal electronic device to look up information related to nursing, but indirectly related to the currently taught subject matter (i.e. in a class related to intravenous therapy, the student researches pneumonia).
- Using the personal electronic device to communicate with other students about the content of the current class (i.e. during a lecture, a student sends an SMS (text message) to another student in class to seek clarification about the topic).

In the practice setting

- When a student is not directly involved in patient care, but uses the electronic device to look up general nursing information that may or may not relate to the care being provided (i.e. during a quiet time in the acute patient care setting, the student uses the device to read a nursing blog on pain management).
- Use of an electronic device to take notes (i.e. a student uses an electronic device to write a reflective journal within practice hours).

Personal use

The personal use of electronic devices is generally **not** acceptable during classroom courses and/or practice experiences. The exception is during scheduled breaks. The personal use of electronic devices must not interfere with direct or indirect patient care, personal learning and the learning of other students. Some examples are provided below:

In the classroom and/or practice setting

- Communicating socially with friends or family
- Using social media (i.e. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Messenger, etc.)
- Playing games
- Accessing the internet to browse websites unrelated to nursing
- Reading an e-book unrelated to nursing
- Listening to music
- Viewing photos or videos
- Taking photos or videos is not permitted under any circumstance if patient confidentiality is at risk of being compromised. This includes taking a photo of a wound without assumed patient identifiers
- Completing assignments from another course (nursing or otherwise)

Standard 2

Use of cell phones for taking calls

Students are reminded that cell phones may only be used in a manner that is respectful towards others.

In the classroom

The School of Nursing requires that all students follow these instructions regarding cellular phones:

- The cellular device will remain on vibrate or silent mode at all times
- If an urgent call is anticipated during scheduled class time, it is important to make the teacher aware prior to class commencing.
- If a phone call is urgent and must be answered, quietly leave the classroom and take and complete the call in a reasonable amount of time. Alternatively, allow the call to go to voicemail and return the call during a scheduled break.
- If an urgent and expected phone call is received, please proactively situate yourself close to the door, to avoid disrupting others. Ideally the student communicates with the teacher in advance that an expected phone call is anticipated.

In the practice setting

It is inappropriate to use a cell phone during practice hours. In the event a student is **required** to receive a call or return a voicemail that is urgent in nature, the following etiquette is asked of all students by the School of Nursing:

- The cellular device be placed on and remain in vibrate or silent mode at all times
- The student will excuse him/herself to the practice teacher or staff prior to taking the call or responding to the phone message. The student must be **physically** off the unit (i.e. a common public area) when making or taking calls.

Standard 3

Use of electronic devices during exams/quizzes

Teachers will determine if electronic devices may be permitted during exams/quizzes

- All cellular telephones (including Smartphones) will powered off or placed in silent mode. The phone is to be stored in a location that is not immediately accessible to the student.
- The teacher will be informed prior to the start of any exams/quizzes of any extenuating circumstances that may result in a student needing to access the telephone during the exam/quiz

Use of calculators during exams/quizzes

If students are permitted to use calculators during an exam/quiz, the following regulations will be followed:

- Students may only use calculators with **basic functions**
- Calculators on Smartphone devices are not permitted under any circumstance

Confidentiality

Use of electronic devices that may compromise patient safety or confidentiality is never appropriate or permitted under any circumstance (i.e. photographing, audio or video recording people or documents). Photographing for documentation purposes (i.e. wound healing) is not permitted. This practice is reserved for Enterostomal Therapy (ET) nurses using hospital provisioned recording devices and equipment.

Consequences of inappropriate use of electronic devices

In the classroom

If a student uses an electronic device in an inappropriate manner, the students' actions will be documented as per the [Unprofessional Conduct Disciplinary Process & Report Form](#).

If a student uses an electronic device in a manner that constitutes academic misconduct (i.e. cheating on an exam) the student will be disciplined in accordance with the [Discipline for Academic Misconduct](#) as per the University Academic Calendar.

In the practice setting

If a student uses his/her electronic device in an inappropriate manner, the students' actions will be documented in the Practice Appraisal Form (PAF) in the appropriate domain of nursing practice. The behaviour may result in an unsatisfactory (U) rating on the PAF.