

General Policies for Admissions

Minimum Technology Requirements

To be successful in courses at South University all students must have access to a personal computer meeting the minimum technology requirements for their program and reliable internet access. Minimum technology requirements are reviewed annually in the Spring and can be found in the student portal and on the South University website.

Criminal History, Charges and Background Checks

Acceptance into a South University program or its completion does not imply or guarantee that a student will be able to obtain licensure, certification, or employment. Students wishing to enter a program in the College of Arts and Sciences, College of Business, College of Health Professions, the College of Nursing and Public Health, or the School of Pharmacy should be aware that a prior felony conviction may restrict an individual's ability to obtain professional licensure, certification, or employment.

In the event a student has an undisclosed criminal history or active charge prior to adjudication on a background check, the ability to matriculate, progress and complete a degree program and/or to become licensed, if applicable, may be impacted. Active or prior criminal charges/convictions may impact the student's ability to participate in required educational experiences and/or future eligibility for professional licensure necessitating voluntary withdrawal or administrative dismissal from the program.

The University is not able to guarantee the eligibility for licensure or employment in their field of any student/graduate with (or without) any criminal history of pending charges. Students must disclose, in writing, any criminal history and active/pending charges at the time of application and must disclose any new charges to the relevant program director, immediately, for consideration.

Applicants and students should see the Program Director (or designee) for additional information.

Comprehensive Background Check - College of Health Professions

Protection of vulnerable patient populations is important to the South University College of Health Professions and its academic programs, faculty, and students and to clinical affiliation sites where students complete clinical requirements for completion of an academic program. Many clinical sites require criminal background checks for employees and students who provide patient care. As clinical placements are a mandatory component of South University College of Health Professions Programs, a positive criminal history impairs the ability of students to be placed in clinical externships required for completion of the program.

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Students who are considering applying to programs within the College of Health Professions are advised to review the admission and enrollment requirements for background checks listed in the academic catalog and program specific handbook.

Students applying to programs within the College of Health Professions will be subject to a background check that may include, but is not limited to:

1. Social Security Number Verification
2. Criminal Search
3. Violent Sex Offender and Predator Registry Search
4. HHS/OIG List of Excluded Individuals
5. GSA List of Parties Excluded from Federal Programs
6. U.S. Treasury, Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC), List of Specially Designated Nationals (SDN)
7. Applicable State Exclusion List, if available

Note: Some clinical agencies may require additional background check requirements.

Obtaining a Background Check Report

Programs within the College of Health Professions will designate an approved company to conduct the background checks and issue reports. Results from a company other than those designated will not be accepted. Results must be received by the program from the approved company and may not be hand delivered by the student to the institution. Students and/or applicants must contact the designated company and comply with its instructions in authorizing and obtaining a background check. Students and/or applicants are responsible for payment of any fees charged by a designated company to provide the background check service.

Rights

Students and applicants who have received an offer of admission 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 would adversely affect the applicant or student, the Program Director within the College of Health Professions will provide applicants or students information regarding access to the background check report issued by the designated company. Additionally, the Program Director will inform the student and/or applicant of his/her rights, how to contact the designated company to challenge the accuracy of the report, and that the designated company is not involved in any decisions made by the College of Health Professions.

Current Students

- Students may be required to complete an initial or additional background check prior to the start of an assignment at a healthcare facility as required by the program or the facility. Background check reports will be submitted to the program for review.

Confidentiality and Record Keeping

- Background check reports and other submitted information are confidential and may only be reviewed by university officials and affiliated clinical facilities in accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).
- Students: Background check reports and other submitted information of students will be maintained in a separate file from the student record in accordance with the university's record retention policy for student records.

- Applicants Denied Matriculation: Background check reports and other submitted information of applicants denied matriculation into the program will be maintained in accordance with the university's record retention policy.

Other Provisions

- A student who has a break in enrollment will be required to complete a new background check. A break in enrollment is defined as non-enrollment of at least one quarter in the approved curriculum of the degree program.
- Falsification of information, including omission of relevant information, may result in denial of admission or dismissal from the educational program.
- Students are responsible for notifying the Program Director if the student is charged or convicted of any misdemeanor or felony while enrolled in any portion of the program. Criminal activity that occurs while a student is in attendance at the university may result in disciplinary action, including dismissal, and will be addressed through the university's academic or disciplinary policies. Failure to notify the program is grounds for dismissal from the program.

Comprehensive Background Check - College of Nursing and Public Health

Nurses are entrusted with the health, safety and welfare of patients. The nursing curriculum contains a didactic and clinical component. Clinical facilities where student nurses practice are required by accreditation agencies to obtain background checks for security purposes on individuals that have direct patient contact. A criminal/background check is required to place students in clinical environments. Students are responsible for the cost of the criminal background check.

All students applying for the South University nursing program are required to obtain a Level 1 and Level 2 criminal background investigation. Students starting in a didactic course are required to have the background investigation completed prior to completion of the first quarter of enrollment. Students starting in a clinical course are required to have the background investigation completed prior to the end of the drop/add period of the first quarter of enrollment. A student who does not adhere to this requirement will be unregistered from all courses. Note: pre-licensure students and Virginia students must have background checks completed prior to starting nursing classes.

Based on the deadlines above, the student's background results must be clear (no criminal convictions or pending charges). A student whose investigation shows a felony conviction or findings/misdemeanors that constitute a significant breach of moral or ethical conduct will be withdrawn from consideration or if accepted must cancel their enrollment with the nursing program, and will not be allowed to reapply. Findings of non-traffic criminal convictions may require additional screening. Students will be notified by the Program Director or Clinical Coordinator of criminal convictions that require information and follow up. The student will be given 5 business days to provide additional documentation. After 5 business days, if no documentation is provided or if documentation is insufficient, the student will be unregistered from all courses and the enrollment will be cancelled.

Students must notify the Program Director or Clinical Coordinator, in writing within 5 business days of any non-traffic criminal convictions that occur during the nursing program of study.

Annual updates will be required during the program of study. A felony conviction and/or behaviors/misdemeanor conviction that constitute a significant breach of moral or ethical standards will result in immediate dismissal from the nursing program.

A student whose background check contains non-traffic criminal convictions will be notified by the Program Director or Clinical Coordinator for follow up. The student will be given 5 business days to provide additional documentation. After 5 business days, if no documentation is provided or if documentation is insufficient, the student will be dismissed from the program.

Students who don't complete their annual update will not be allowed to register for the next quarter. Students who fail to provide their annual update after two quarters will be dismissed from the program. A student who wishes to return to the Nursing Program must complete the annual update and follow the Reinstatement Policy in the South University Catalog. There is no guarantee of reinstatement.

Acceptance into a South University educational program, or its completion, does not imply or guarantee that a student will be able to obtain licensure or certification.

The Nursing Program Director may be required to submit written documentation regarding the student status to boards of nursing and clinical agencies as early as receipt of the student's CON application. Students may be required to obtain additional background checks as requested by clinical agencies or boards of nursing.

College of Health Professions Substance Abuse and Screening Policy

Substance Abuse Policy

Drug and alcohol disorders can be detrimental to one's overall physical and emotional health, as well as academic and professional performance. The College of Health Professions has adopted the following policy and procedures related to student drug and alcohol testing and students suspected of impairment due to drugs or alcohol.

Drug and Alcohol Screening

Students must consent to drug and alcohol testing as dictated by individual program policies. Testing may occur before and during student enrollment in health profession programs. A student who has a break in enrollment will be required to pass a new drug test prior to re-enrollment. A break in enrollment is defined as non-enrollment of at least one quarter in the approved curriculum of the degree program. An outside facility conducts testing, and the cost of testing is the student's sole responsibility.

College of Health Profession Rules Related to Alcohol and Drugs

1. Due to the nature of the practice of health professions programs, the College of Health Professions maintains a zero-tolerance policy for any violation outlined in this policy. Students who violate this policy are subject to immediate dismissal. Applicants who violate this policy are ineligible for program matriculation.
2. When students are engaged in any clinical/fieldwork activity while enrolled in a South University Health Professions program, they are prohibited from:
 - Using, possessing, buying, selling, manufacturing or transferring any Schedule I or illicit unscheduled drugs or Schedule II-V drugs not lawfully prescribed for and obtained by the individual.
 - Possessing drug paraphernalia or secondary devices for processing, manipulating or utilizing illicit substances (any suspected illegal/illicit drugs or drug paraphernalia will be confiscated and turned over to an appropriate law enforcement agency which may result in criminal prosecution).
 - The presence of any detectable level of alcohol (≥ 0.01 g/dL), illicit drug, or controlled substance in a student's system while engaged in any clinical/fieldwork activity.

- Common examples of substances prohibited by the College of Health Professions include: any alcohol, drugs, or other substances whether ingested, inhaled, injected subcutaneously, or otherwise that have known mind-altering or function-altering effects upon the human body or that impair one's ability to safely perform their work, including, but not limited to: prescription drugs; over-the-counter medications; alcohol; drugs and other substances made illegal under federal or state law; "synthetic or designer" drugs; illegal inhalants; "look-alike" drugs; amphetamines, cannabinoids (marijuana and hashish), cocaine, phencyclidine (PCP), and opiates; and any drugs or other substances referenced in Schedule I through V of the Controlled Substances Act (Title 21 United States Code (USC)).
 - Although some states permit adults to possess and consume marijuana under certain circumstances, the possession, use, or distribution of marijuana, (including for medical purposes) is not permitted when engaged in a South University activity. Students should be aware that use of any product resulting in a positive drug screen for tetrahydrocannabinol (THC, the principal psychoactive constituent of cannabis including marijuana) is a violation of the College of Health Professions Substance Abuse and Screening policy.
3. South University reserves the right to take appropriate disciplinary action, including permanent programmatic dismissal, for alleged crimes involving the usage/sale/distribution of illicit or controlled substances at any time during a student's matriculation in the program. Any student who is arrested, convicted, pleads guilty, or is sentenced for a crime involving an illegal drug or controlled substance is required to report the arrest, conviction, plea or sentence to the appropriate program representative (e.g., Program Director) within five calendar days. Failure to report any arrest, conviction, plea, or sentence will be grounds for immediate and permanent dismissal from the program.
 4. In addition to the South University Code of Conduct expectations outlined in the campus student handbook, the College of Health Professions does not allow any student to perform any functions pertaining to the clinical/fieldwork experience while under the influence of alcohol or drugs or while taking over-the-counter or prescribed medication(s) that may impair the student's ability to safely and effectively perform required duties/functions. If a student believes his/her ability to safely and effectively perform required functions is impaired for any reason, the student must immediately contact the appropriate administrator (e.g., Dean of Student Affairs, Program Director, Clinical/Fieldwork Coordinator).
 5. If a student acknowledges that an alcohol or substance abuse problem exists, that student may self-report to the appropriate administrator (e.g., Dean of Student Affairs, Program Director, Clinical/Fieldwork Coordinator). When self-reporting occurs in advance of any reportable or actionable incident or event related to student impairment, the student will be offered referrals to substance abuse counseling or treatment. Students who self-report may be eligible for withdrawal from the university, and readmission will be determined by individual programmatic policy.

Mandatory Drug Testing

Students will undergo drug screening as determined by the College of Health Professions. Timing of testing may be before admission, before clinical placements, or any time during enrollment in the program as outlined in each program's specific policy. Drug testing will be conducted by an approved testing agency selected by programs within the College of Health Professions; such testing shall be paid for by the student. Results of testing must be transmitted directly from the selected screening agency to the program; no hand-delivered results from students will be accepted. A student with a positive drug test as determined by a qualified drug testing agency will be referred to the appropriate administrator and is subject to dismissal from the program.

Students who are taking over-the-counter or prescribed medication are responsible for being aware of the effect the medication may have on their performance or personal behavior and are to report the medication(s) to the testing facility in the case of a positive drug test result.

Additional drug tests may be required by specific academic programs or clinical sites per program requirements and clinical agreements. Students are responsible for all drug testing expenses.

Drug or Alcohol Testing (with cause)

In addition to any initial drug testing requirement, the College of Health Professions, with reasonable suspicion or at the recommendation of any clinical site, may require any student who is suspected of being under the influence of drugs or alcohol to undergo an immediate (within one (1) hour) mandatory drug screening. Students are prohibited from reporting to the clinical facility while under the influence of drugs or alcohol. A student in violation of the policy will be subject to immediate removal from the clinical facility and dismissal from the program. Results of testing must be transmitted directly from the selected screening agency and the program; no hand-delivered results from students will be accepted.

Testing Procedures

1. In the event of reasonable suspicion or at the recommendation of any clinical site personnel, the following actions will be taken:
 - a. The student will be removed from the patient care area and the Program Director/Clinical Coordinator will be notified for further direction.
 - b. An academic or clinical faculty member will facilitate the student's communication with a transportation service or emergency contact to arrange transport to an off-site testing facility (as required). The student is not to transport himself/herself.
 - c. Medical assessment, treatment, and transportation will be at the student's expense.
 - d. If the student's behavior is threatening or belligerent, the instructor or clinical site supervisor may notify law enforcement to have the student escorted from the premises.
2. Students are required to contact the program before undergoing a drug test to ensure the correct testing service and panel is conducted.
3. Positive drug tests will be evaluated by an independent Medical Review Officer (MRO) designated by the drug testing agency selected by the program.
4. A positive drug test for illicit substances may qualify for a confirmatory follow-up test as recommended by the testing facility or MRO. If a student is taking prescribed medications for which a positive drug test may result, the student is responsible for reporting the prescription and dosage to the drug testing service.
5. Attendance at clinical sites will be denied to students who refuse or fail to provide a sample for a drug test or who have an unsatisfactory test result.

Due Process and Confidentiality

Due Process

Students who are dismissed have the right to due process according to program and University policies.

Confidentiality

Information and records relating to positive test results, drug and alcohol dependencies, and legitimate medical explanations provided to the Medical Review Officer (MRO) shall be kept confidential to the extent required by law and maintained in a separate location from student academic files. Such records and information may be disclosed to South University administration, clinical placement sites, and Dean of Student Affairs on a need-to-know basis and may also be disclosed when relevant to a grievance, charge, claim, or other legal proceeding initiated by or on behalf of a student. Students have the right to review the drug testing results.

College of Nursing and Public Health (CONPH) Substance Abuse and Screening Policy

Substance Abuse Policy

Drug and alcohol disorders can be detrimental to one's overall physical and emotional health, as well as academic and professional performance. The College of Nursing and Public Health has adopted the following policy and procedures related to student drug and alcohol testing and students suspected of impairment due to drugs or alcohol.

Drug and Alcohol Screening

Students must consent to drug and alcohol testing as dictated by individual program policies. Testing may occur before and during student enrollment in health profession programs. A student who has a break in enrollment will be required to pass a new drug test prior to re-enrollment. A break in enrollment is defined as non-enrollment of at least one quarter in the approved curriculum of the degree program. An outside facility conducts testing, and the cost of testing is the student's sole responsibility.

College of Nursing and Public Health Rules Related to Alcohol and Drugs

1. Due to the nature of the practice of nursing and public health programs, the College of Nursing and Public Health maintains a zero-tolerance policy for any violation outlined in this policy. Students who violate this policy are subject to immediate dismissal. Applicants who violate this policy are ineligible for program matriculation.
2. When students are engaged in any clinical/fieldwork activity while enrolled in a South University Nursing and Public Health program, they are prohibited from:
 - Using, possessing, buying, selling, manufacturing or transferring any Schedule I or illicit unscheduled drugs or Schedule II-V drugs not lawfully prescribed for and obtained by the individual.
 - Possessing drug paraphernalia or secondary devices for processing, manipulating or utilizing illicit substances (any suspected illegal/illicit drugs or drug paraphernalia will be confiscated and turned over to an appropriate law enforcement agency which may result in criminal prosecution).
 - Having the presence of any detectable level of alcohol (≥ 0.01 g/dL), illicit drug, or controlled substance in a student's system while engaged in any clinical/fieldwork activity.
 - Common examples of substances prohibited by the College of Nursing and Public Health include: any alcohol, drugs, or other substances whether ingested, inhaled, injected subcutaneously, or otherwise that have known mind-altering or function-altering effects upon the human body or that impair one's ability to safely perform their work, including, but not limited to: prescription drugs; over-the-counter medications; alcohol; drugs and other substances made illegal under federal or state law; "synthetic or designer" drugs; illegal inhalants; "look-alike" drugs; amphetamines, cannabinoids (marijuana and hashish), cocaine, phencyclidine (PCP), and opiates; and any drugs or other substances referenced in Schedule I through V of the Controlled Substances Act (Title 21 United States Code (USC)).
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3. South University reserves the right to take appropriate disciplinary action, including permanent programmatic dismissal, for alleged crimes involving the usage/sale/distribution of illicit or controlled substances at any time during a student's matriculation in the program. Any student who is arrested, convicted, pleads guilty, or is sentenced for a crime involving an illegal drug or controlled substance is required to report the arrest, conviction, plea or sentence to the appropriate program representative (e.g., Program Director) within five calendar days. Failure to report any arrest, conviction, plea, or sentence will be grounds for immediate and permanent dismissal from the program.
4. In addition to the South University Code of Conduct expectations outlined in the campus student handbook, the College of Nursing and Public Health does not allow any student to perform any functions pertaining to the clinical/fieldwork experience while under the influence of alcohol or drugs or while taking over-the-counter or prescribed medication(s) that may impair the student's ability to safely and effectively perform required duties/functions. If a student believes his/her ability to safely and effectively perform required functions is impaired for any reason, the student must immediately contact the appropriate administrator (e.g., Dean of Student Affairs, Program Director, Clinical/Fieldwork Coordinator).
5. If a student acknowledges that an alcohol or substance abuse problem exists, that student may self-report to the appropriate administrator (e.g., Dean of Student Affairs, Program Director, Clinical/Fieldwork Coordinator). When self-reporting occurs in advance of any reportable or actionable incident or event related to student impairment, the student will be offered referrals to substance abuse counseling or treatment. Students who self-report may be eligible for withdrawal from the university, and readmission will be determined by individual programmatic policy.

Mandatory Testing

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