

School of Nursing & Health Sciences' Investigation Algorithm

Text version

The Penn College School of Nursing & Health Sciences' Investigation Algorithm is a flow chart that will be applied to incidents occurring within clinical, fieldwork, practicum, and other patient-care settings. It may also apply to educational settings in which behavioral incidents pose risk to the safety and well-being of students, faculty, and/or staff. The algorithm is not intended for investigation of behaviors that are assessed through established grading mechanism.

Definition of Terms

System: protocols, processes, and conditions existing or occurring within a patient-care/educational setting that are inherent to the organization's operations.

Purpose to cause harm: conscious objective to cause harm.

Reckless behavior: behavioral choice to consciously disregard a substantial and unjustifiable risk.

At-risk behavior: behavioral choice that increases risk where risk is not recognized, or is mistakenly believed to be justified.

Human error: inadvertently doing other than what was intended: a slip, lapse, or mistake.

Algorithm

The algorithm flowchart image presents boxes with questions. Most boxes have two options: Yes or No. Depending on the answer, the flowchart leads the reader to another question box. This continues until the questions and answers lead to a terminating box that identifies the level of student culpability and resulting action.

In this section, the algorithm flowchart is described by listing each question with possible next questions or terminating box based on the Yes or No answer.

Were the actions intended to deliberately harm the another person?

- If Yes, Flow chart terminates at: Purpose to Cause Harm – Program dismissal.
- If No, Were there significant circumstances involving the system which contributed to the errors?

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- If Yes, Did the student play a role in the error?
- If No, Did the student conceal the error or falsify records?

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- If Yes, Did the student conceal the error or falsify records?

- If No, Flow chart terminates at: Program needs to address system error.

Did the student conceal the error or falsify records?

- If Yes, Flow chart terminates at: Reckless Behavior – Program dismissal.
- If No, Did the student knowingly disregard or consciously take a substantial and unjustifiable risk?

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- If Yes, Did the student's actions cause a risk of imminent harm to self or others?
- If No, Is there a history of other similar or serious error by this student?

Did the student's actions cause a risk of imminent harm to self or others?

- If Yes, Flow chart terminates at: Reckless Behavior – Program dismissal.
- If No, Flow chart terminates at: Reckless Behavior – Course Failure.

Is there a history of other similar or serious error by this student?

- If Yes, Did the student previously receive remediation or counseling for a similar error?
- If No, Could a reasonably prudent student have done the same in similar circumstance?

Did the student previously receive remediation or counseling for a similar error?

- If Yes, Flow chart terminates at: Reckless Behavior – Course Failure.
- If No, Flow chart terminates at: At-Risk Behavior – Increased supervision/mentoring and focused remediation.

Could a reasonably prudent student have done the same in similar circumstance?

- If Yes, Flow chart terminates at: Human Error – Focused remediation
- If No, Flow chart terminates at: At-Risk Behavior – Increased supervision/mentoring and focused remediation.

Additional notes:

The Purpose to Cause Harm and Reckless Behavior termination boxes may also result in Student Affairs findings of Code of Conduct violations.

The program will address any system errors uncovered during the investigation.

Acknowledgements:

The Penn College School of Nursing & Health Sciences' Investigation Algorithm was derived from NCBON's Complaint Evaluation Tool (2011) and Outcome Engenuity's Just Culture Algorithm V3.2 (2012).