

Practical Nursing

Certificate

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Length: Three semesters

Purpose/Mission/Goal: The 12-month certificate curriculum in practical nursing is designed to prepare selected students to qualify as contributing members of the health team providing safe and competent nursing care under the direction of registered nurses and doctors. Upon successful completion of the curriculum, students will be eligible to apply to take the National Council Licensure Examination PN leading to licensure as a Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN).

Occupational Objective: Employment opportunities for the LPN include, but are not limited to, staff positions in hospitals, long-term care facilities, physician offices, clinics, home health agencies, public schools, day care centers, and other health related agencies under the direction of registered nurses and doctors.

Program Student Learning Outcomes:

1. Safety- Perform basic nursing skills in a safe, legal, and ethical manner for patients across the lifespan in a variety of settings including health promotion and treatment of illness.
2. Teamwork- Collaborate and communicate with all members of the healthcare team to ensure safe, quality patient care.
3. Relationship- Centered Care- Provide safe, holistic, culturally appropriate nursing care using evidence-based practice and the nursing process.
4. Quality- Assume responsibility and accountability for the quality of nursing care provided to patients and their families in a variety of healthcare settings.
5. System-Based Care- Apply knowledge of the community, the healthcare system, and the needs of the individual/ family to ensure the delivery of cost-effective quality patient-centered care.
6. Professional Development- Function to the full scope of safe nursing practice specific to practical nursing, seeking assistance in situations beyond individual expertise to provide safe, quality care.

Admission Requirements: Admission to the VHCC Practical Nursing Program is a selective process. The program is open to applicants who are free of any physical or mental condition which might adversely affect performance as a member of the healthcare team. In addition to the requirements for admission to the college, the applicant must meet the following requirements by the application deadline:

1. Graduation from high school or satisfactory completion of the GED.
2. Good standing with the most recently attended institution with a minimum GPA of 2.0.
3. Demonstrated proficiency in mathematics as evidenced by:
 - MTE 1-4 or MDE 10 either through the Virginia Placement Test (VPT) OR prescribed developmental work within the last 6 years OR
 - Completion of a college level math course equivalent to MTE 1-4 with a grade of C or better OR
 - SAT Score of 470/ACT Score 17 within the last 6 years, OR
 - GED- Math score of 155 165 or above within the last 6 years, OR
 - Has successfully completed developmental courses within the last 6 years, OR
 - High School GPA (HSGPA) 2.0 or higher & Algebra II, o within the last 6 years with a "C" or better OR
 - HSCGPA 3.0 or higher & Algebra I within last 6 years with a C or better

ATI TEAS math rank of 40th national percentile rank or higher

4. Demonstrated competency in English as evidenced by:

Virginia Placement Test with placement in ENG 111 or ENG 111 plus EDE 11 within the last 6 years, OR

Completion of a college level English course equivalent to ENG 111 with grade of C or better, OR

ACT Reading and Writing Score 15 or above within the last 6 years, OR

SAT Reading/Writing 400 or above within the last 6 years, OR

GED- English score of 165 or above within the last 6 years, OR

Successfully completed applicable English developmental courses within the last 6 years OR

High School GPA (HSGPA) 2.0 or higher within the last 6 years

5. Demonstrated competency in Science Biology as evidenced by:

One unit of high school Biology or college equivalent with grade C or better OR

Completion of BIO 145 with grade of C or better OR

Completion of PNE 155 (Body Structure and Function) with grade of C or better OR

Completion of BOTH BIO 141 and BIO 142 with grade of C or better

6. Completion of the Test of Essential Academic Skills (TEAS) with a National Percentile Rank score of 40 or above.

7. A 2.0 grade point average (GPA) for high school courses** or a 2.0 curricular GPA for college coursework.

8. A 2.0 cumulative grade point average (GPA) for ENG 111, PNE 155, PSY 230, ITE 119, and SDV 101.

9. Completion of Practical Nursing Application for each academic year interested in being considered.

Application: Applications for the Practical Nursing program are online at <https://www.vhcc.edu/future-students/nurse-ready>. Students are encouraged to submit their application when they have completed the admission requirements of demonstrating proficiency in Math/English/Science, a TEAS score of 40th or higher percentile rank and completion of the 1st semester general education courses. Once the criteria have been met an official acceptance letter will be sent to the applicant. The priority deadline for applications is April 15. Applications will continue to be accepted after the priority deadline only if seats are available.

The application process includes uploading official high school transcripts, all college transcripts; GED test scores (if applicable), and a copy of TEAS results.

If all transcripts are not included, the Admissions Office will suspend processing an application.

Transcripts from other Virginia Community Colleges are not required; however, any Virginia Community Colleges attended must be listed on both the Admissions Application and the Practical Nursing Application.

All prerequisites (general biology, English and math proficiency) must be met and all documents submitted by the application deadline.

Further details of the application process can be found at www.vhcc.edu/medapp (click Future Students > Admissions > Applications & Forms > Medical Program Applications).

Out-of-region applicants will only be considered for openings in the practical nursing program after all qualified in-region applicants are considered (see VHCC Student Handbook, Admission Priorities). To be considered in-region, an applicant must be domiciled within the service region for 12 months prior to the program application deadline.

Transfer of Nursing Credit: Students seeking to transfer credit from nursing programs at other institutions will be considered on an individual basis. Requested transfer courses will be evaluated for currency, comparability, relevancy to the nursing program degree, calculation of credit including didactic and clinical time and the grade earned. Transcripts of students transferring from non-regionally accredited colleges and universities will be evaluated on a course-by-course basis by the Coordinator of Admissions and Records.

Students must meet the admission requirements identified by the college and the VHCC PN Program. The student may be asked to provide course descriptions, documentation of completed direct patient care clinical time, course syllabi, achievement or progressive testing scores, demonstration of competency in critical nursing skills, and selected data from the course instructor or program director in order to determine placement in the nursing program. Consideration will be subject to availability of space. Since there frequently are differences among nursing programs, students wishing to transfer should be aware that there may be an interruption in program progression. Applicants must be in good standing at their previous college with a "C" average or better and must provide documentation from the Nursing School Program Director of eligibility to return to that nursing program as well as documentation of the number of hours of clinical experiences providing direct patient care supervised by a qualified instructor. Nursing courses which are being transferred must have been completed within three (3) years prior to admission to the nursing program.

Decisions on admission offers to transferring applicants will be determined by the VHCC PN Coordinator following official transcript analysis, review of completed nursing course outlines, and space and faculty availability. A transferring student must demonstrate expected level proficiencies by testing including demonstration of competency in critical skills. The transferring applicant may have to repeat courses.

Notification of United States Department of Education Regulation

Pursuant to United States Department of Education (US DOE) regulation 34 CFR 668.43 (a) (5) (v), the Virginia Highlands Community College (VHCC) Practical Nursing program provides the following information for all prospective and current students:

The VHCC PN program meets all Virginia Board of Nursing requirements for pre-licensure nursing education programs in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

The Commonwealth of Virginia participates with 32 other states in the National Council of State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN) National Licensing Compact (NLC) to allow nurses licensed in one state to provide nursing care across state lines in other compact states. The Uniform Licensing Requirements (ULRs) are found at: https://www.ncsbn.org/NLC_ULRs.pdf.

States currently in the NLC are found at: <https://www.ncsbn.org/nlcmemberstates.pdf>. Prospective and current students are strongly encouraged to evaluate all state requirements in jurisdictions where they intend to practice nursing. A list of all state requirements is found at: <https://www.ncsbn.org/14730.htm>.

VHCC has not determined if the PN program meets the requirements of any other states.

This statement serves to meet the US DOE regulation until further notice.

Program Requirements: The PN program is dependent on use of local clinical agencies to meet the experiential or clinical learning

needs of its students. In order to protect patients and visitors as well as students, clinical agencies require that each student have proof of completion of clinical requirements. Students who do not complete and/or maintain clinical requirements by established deadlines will be prohibited from attending clinicals and will be administratively withdrawn from the nursing clinical course. Prior to enrollment in any PNE course, the student must provide the following documentation:

1. Required Student Forms.
2. Annual Student Statement of Health Form
3. Student Information, Physical, Immunization Forms.
 - a. A physical examination from must be completed by a medical practitioner, MD, PA, or CNP.
 - b. Immunizations including Tetanus, Mumps-Measles-Rubella (MMR), Varicella, Hepatitis B, Influenza, and COVID
 - c. Current 2-Step Tuberculosis testing for tuberculosis, either Mantoux Tuberculin Skin Test (TB Tine Test is not accepted) or chest X-ray if applicable.
 - d. Documentation of ability to perform physical demands required in direct patient care activities.
4. Purchase a background check, drug screen, and medical document package.
5. Clearance of criminal background check and drug testing.
6. Proof of CPR certification, American Heart Association, Basic Life Support (BLS) for Healthcare Providers completed during the summer (May 15 – August 1) prior to admission to PNE courses and maintained throughout the program.

The cost of these requirements is the responsibility of the student.

Special Note: The State Board of Nursing has the authority to deny license to any applicant who has violated any of the provisions of 54.1-3007 of the Code of Virginia. Most healthcare organizations are prohibited from hiring persons who have been convicted of certain criminal acts (For a list of crimes under this category refer to the Virginia Board of Nursing webpage under the heading, Licensure/Applicants: Article 90-55, click on the link, [Joint statement of the Department of Health and The Department of Health Professions on Impact of Criminal Convictions on Nursing Licensure or Certification and Employment in Virginia, Revised December 2020](#)). Students with criminal convictions must meet with the Dean of Nursing. Permission for clinical assignments must be received from clinical affiliations for applicable students. Clinical facilities that will not approve student placement results in students being unable to complete program requirements and ineligible to continue the program. Students with positive drug screens are addressed individually and may results in being prohibited from clinical activities and therefore, unable to complete the program requirements. Contact the Dean of Nursing for clarification of specific issues.

Performance Standards for Clinical Laboratory Assignments:

Students must be able to perform all essential job functions or performance standards in clinical settings with reasonable accommodation. The following performance standards are consistent with those identified by the Southern Regional Education Boards and include, but are not limited to:

1. Critical thinking: Critical thinking ability sufficient for clinical judgment and delivery of safe patient care.
2. Interpersonal abilities: Interpersonal abilities sufficient to interact with clients, families and groups from a variety of social, emotional, cultural, and intellectual backgrounds.
3. Communication: Communication abilities sufficient for interaction with others in verbal and written form.
4. Mobility: Physical abilities sufficient to move from room to room and maneuver in small spaces.
5. Motor skills: Gross and fine motor abilities sufficient to provide safe and effective nursing care.

6. Physical demands: Physical demands in this program include duties that frequently require squatting, bending, kneeling, reaching, and stair climbing; lifting and carrying up to 50 pounds; frequent pushing and pulling up to 200 pounds with assistance; occasional lifting up to 200 pounds with assistance and occasional carrying up to 51-74 pounds.

7. Hearing: Auditory ability sufficient to monitor and assess health needs.

8. Visual: Visual ability sufficient for nursing observation and assessment.

9. Tactile: Tactile ability sufficient for physical assessment.

Financial Requirements:

In addition to the usual college tuition and fees, the nursing program requires pre-admission testing and other expenses in which students are responsible for. These include a digital device such as a laptop or tablet to use in classroom and lab, uniforms/shoes, watch, stethoscope, standardized program progressive products, textbooks, electronic technology, CastleBranch Criminal Background, drug screening, and document manager, HIPAA certification, CPR certification, Physical exam and Immunizations, and Tuberculosis testing, and Health Insurance. Students are responsible for these costs as well as the cost of transportation to and from the College and health agencies used for clinical experiences. Refer to the VHCC PN Handbook for further details. Refund of cost of tuition is dependent on the academic calendar last day to drop and receive a refund. Refund of other costs such as health physical examination, immunizations, CPR, and CastleBranch are not refundable. Cost associated with textbooks and uniforms (and accessories) are contingent upon the individual vendor.

Financial Aid

VHCC strives to assure that no one be denied the opportunity of attending the College for financial reasons. Students are encouraged to contact the Financial Aid office at VHCC to determine eligibility. Refer to the Financial Aid section in the Student Catalog for requirements. Potential scholarships are available through the VHCC Foundation.

Course Requirements: The student is required to complete a sequence of courses and learning experiences provided at the college and selected community agencies such as hospitals, long-term care facilities, clinics, physicians' offices and comparable facilities. The practical nursing faculty will observe and evaluate the student's suitability for nursing and direct patient care.

Students must complete all courses sequentially as listed in the curriculum. A student must have a "C" or above in theory plus "satisfactory" in clinical performance in all nursing courses to remain in the program. A grade of "C" or above in any related requirements is a prerequisite for continuing in the nursing program.

The nursing program faculty reserves the right to recommend, through appropriate channels, the withdrawal of any student who does not exhibit suitable demeanor/attendance.

Program Progression: Students must earn a minimum grade of "C" in all required courses and maintain a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.0 to remain eligible for continued enrollment in the nursing program. Any student who earns a final grade lower than a "C" in a required course (either general education or nursing courses) must repeat the course and earn a final grade of "C" or better before taking the next course in the sequence.

A student must obtain permission from the Dean of Nursing to continue in the Practical Nursing Program under the following conditions:

1. Repeating a course with a grade below "C"
2. Withdrawal from a nursing course
3. Cumulative GPA below 2.0.

Reapplication/Readmission Requirements: Students who are not successful in the first practical nursing course, PNE 161, must reapply to the program. A new practical nursing program application packet must be submitted by the application deadline.

A student who wishes to reenter the practical nursing curriculum at any other level must write a letter to the program coordinator and the Dean of Nursing requesting readmission in the semester prior to the semester of enrollment. Re-enrollment must occur no later than three years from successful completion of PNE 161 or the student will have to repeat all practical nursing courses.

The student may be required to enroll in and satisfactorily complete specific courses before readmission. Additional data may be required including a new criminal background check and medical records.

The decision to readmit will be based on additional data, prior performance in the practical nursing program, and space availability.

Based on the course(s) that must be repeated, the student who is readmitted may be required to complete a skills competency course or demonstrate competency in critical nursing skills before progressing to the next level.

A student who has two academic failures or withdrawals in separate semesters will be ineligible for reenrollment in the program. A withdrawal is considered an enrollment. However, due to the pandemic for the academic years 2019-2021, a withdrawal will not be considered an enrollment for this period only. Such a student may not be readmitted if the cumulative grade point average is less than 2.0, including all courses attempted other than practical nursing courses.

According to the VCCS Policy 5.6.3 and VHCC Policy 5.7.4 "A student will normally be limited to two enrollments in the same credit course." Any exception to this policy must be approved by the program dean and the vice president of instruction and student services.

Clinical Contracts: Virginia Highlands Community College has contracts with clinical agencies for both student and patient safety. If students cannot comply with these contractual requirements, they will not be able to participate in clinical activities and will be asked to withdraw from the program. General guidelines follow:

1. Clinical agencies reserve the right to dismiss a student from their agency at any time with due cause. This will be done with advance notice except in an emergency.
2. Published policies of the clinical agency must be followed. Each student must successfully complete an orientation program prior to participating in activities at any clinical facility.
3. Clinical facilities require that all students have documentation of ability to perform the physical demands required in direct patient care activities.
4. Immunizations must be current.
5. Student releases any clinical agency, its agents and employees from any liability for any injury or death to himself or damage to his property arising out of agreement or use of the clinical agencies.
6. Proof of HIPAA, CPR Certification, and health insurance must be provided.

Curriculum: The practical nursing certificate program offers an opportunity for recent high school graduates and other eligible adults to complete the program requirements after 12 months of full-time attendance (1 summer session and 2 semesters).

Students have the option to complete all general education courses required by the practical nursing certificate curriculum before beginning nursing classes.

Course Number	Course Title	Lecture Hours	Lab Hours	Credits
First Semester (Summer)				
PNE 155	¹ Body Structures and Functions	3		3
PSY 230	Developmental Psychology	3	0	3
ITE 119	Information Literacy	3	0	3
ENG 111	College Composition I	3	0	3
SDV 101	Orientation to College Success	1	0	1
Total		13	3	13
Second Semester (Fall)				
PNE 161	Nursing in Health Changes I	4	6	6
PNE 162	Nursing in Health Changes II	6	12	10
Total		10	18	16
Third Semester (Spring)				
PNE 163	Nursing in Health Changes III	4	15	9
PNE 145	Trends in Practical Nursing	1	0	1
PNE 173	Pharmacology for Practical Nurses	2	0	2
Total		7	15	12
Total Minimum Credits for Certificate				41

Footnote:

¹BIO 141 and 142 are acceptable substitutes recommended for progression to the LPN to RN Program. BIO 145 acceptable substitution for PNE 155.