

Virginia Highlands Community College
Nursing
Student Handbook
2026-2029

Revised 8/18/2026

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VIRGINIA HIGHLANDS COMMUNITY COLLEGE NURSING PROGRAM

The Virginia Highlands Community College (VHCC) Registered Nurse (RN) program is proud to provide educational opportunities for students living in the VHCC service area. The nursing program continues to be accredited by the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN), 3390 Peachtree Road NE, Suite 1400, Atlanta, GA 30326, phone: 404-975-5000, [ACEN](#). ACEN is officially recognized as the national accrediting agency for nursing education by the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation (COPA) and by the U.S. Department of Education.

The VHCC Nursing Program office is in the Nursing Education Building (NEB) on the VHCC campus.

Mailing address: VHCC Nursing Program, PO Box 828, Abingdon, VA 24212
Phone: 276-739-2439
Fax: 276-739-2594
Website: [VHCC Nursing Resources](#)

Non-discrimination Statement

It is the policy of the VHCC Nursing Program and the Virginia Community College System (VCCS) to maintain and promote equal employment and educational opportunities without regard to race, color, sex or age (except where sex or age is a bona fide occupational qualification), religion, disability, national origin, marital status, veteran status, political affiliation, sexual orientation, or other non-merit factors. Address inquiries about affirmative action and equal opportunity policies to the Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) officer at VHCC.

Nursing Program Options and Length: (Length includes prerequisites, general education courses, and nursing courses)

Track 1: Traditional Day Program 5 semesters
Track 2: LPN to RN Transition Day Program 5 semesters
Track 3: Part-time Evening/Weekend: 10 semesters
Track 4: LPN to RN Transition Part-time Evening/Weekend: 8 semesters

Nursing Program Outcomes

Expected Level of Achievement with year and rate listed below:

Eighty percent of VHCC graduates will pass the NCLEX-RN on the first attempt.

2021	70.5%
2022	91.04%

2023	97.65%
2024	95.65%
2025	88.89%

On-time Completion Rate: 45% of VHCC graduates will achieve on-time completion beginning with the first nursing course (NSG 100 or comparable)/NSG 115 and completion of NSG 270 or comparable)

2021	80%
2022	50%
2023	64%
2024	79.24%
2025	82.7%

Eighty-five percent of program graduates will be employed as a Registered Nurse within one year after graduation.

2021	90.1%
2022	93%
2023	100%
2024	100%
2025	100%

Occupational Objectives

Employment opportunities for the Registered Nurse include, but are not limited to, staff positions in hospitals, nursing homes, health departments, physician offices, clinics, home health agencies, public schools, day care centers, and civil service.

NURSING PROGRAM MISSION

The mission of the VHCC Nursing Program is to provide affordable community access to quality nursing education. This mission is consistent with the mission of all Associate Degree Programs in the VCCS. The VCCS nursing programs prepare qualified students to provide safe, competent, entry-level nursing care in twenty-first-century healthcare environments. Students are prepared to meet the ever-increasing complexity of Virginia citizens' healthcare needs.

Upon successful completion of the program, qualified graduates can apply to take the National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX-RN), leading to licensure as a registered nurse and employment as an entry-level practicing nurse in a variety of health services settings.

VHCC NURSING Program

The VHCC Nursing Program faculty subscribes to the core competencies for nursing and nursing education.

- While firmly based in science and the arts, the essence of nursing is caring and compassionate patient-centered care.
- Ethical standards, respect for individual dignity, and consideration of cultural context are implicit in the practice of patient-centered care.
- The nurse advocates for patients and families in ways that promote self-determination, integrity, and ongoing growth as human beings.
- Nursing care is provided in collaboration with the patient, the family, and members of the health care team.
- The nurse displays a spirit of inquiry by examining evidence to improve quality of care, promote safety, and improve patient outcomes. Improve the quality of care, promote safety,
- Nursing judgment is integral to making competent decisions related to providing safe and effective nursing care.
- Information management essential to nursing care is communicated via a variety of technological and human means.

The program philosophy and curricular framework of the VHCC Nursing Program reflect the mission of the VCCS Common Curriculum for Associate of Applied Science in Nursing and VHCC. VHCC is dedicated to the belief that everyone should be given a continuing opportunity to develop skills, extend knowledge, and increase awareness of their roles and responsibilities to society. The philosophy and curricular framework are consistent with the legal framework of the VABON.

Student Learning Outcomes and Competencies

Students who complete the Associate of Applied Science degree with a major in Nursing will be expected to demonstrate the outcomes identified in the following table, evidenced by achievement of identified competencies:

Patient-Centered Care: Provide patient-centered care promoting therapeutic relationships, caring behaviors, and self-determination across the lifespan for diverse populations.

- a. Manage patient-centered care with sensitivity and respect.
- b. Formulate a patient-centered plan of care based on the nursing process.
- c. Deliver care in an organized and efficient manner.
- d. Assess learning needs, develop teaching plans, implement necessary teaching, and evaluate effectiveness of teaching to achieve desired outcomes.
- e. Incorporate evidence-based practices and information technology to deliver safe, quality care.
- f. Promote patient self-determination in making health care decisions.
- g. Utilize therapeutic communication skills when interacting with patients and the patient's support network.
- h. Safely and competently perform all nursing interventions and skills within the healthcare/community setting.
 - i. Advocate for diverse individuals, families, and communities across the lifespan in ways that promote their self-determination, integrity, and ongoing growth as human beings.

Safety: Practice safe nursing care that minimizes risk of harm across systems and client populations.

- a. Evaluate human factors and safety design principles.
- b. Describe processes used to analyze causes of errors and allocation of responsibility and accountability.
- c. Report errors to members of the health care team and value a culture of safety through reporting of near misses and hazards in patient care.
- d. Utilize safety-enhancing technologies to identify and prevent potential errors in patient care.
- e. Incorporate National Patient Safety goals into the provision of safe patient care.

Clinical Judgment: Demonstrate nursing judgment through the use of clinical reasoning, the nursing process, and evidence-based practice in the provision of safe, quality care.

- a. Develop an individualized plan of care based on patient values, clinical expertise, and reliable evidence.
- b. Recognize changes in patient status and intervene appropriately.
- c. Apply the nursing process to guide care.
- d. Prioritize patient care accurately using relevant data and best evidence.
- e. Incorporate and value evidence-based practices, evaluate existing practices, and seek creative approaches to problem solving.

Professional Behaviors: Practice professional behaviors that encompass the legal/ethical framework while incorporating self-reflection, leadership, and a commitment to recognize the value of life-long learning.

- a. Display ethical behavior and confidentiality when caring for patients.
- b. Assume responsibility and accountability for delivering safe patient care.
- c. Deliver nursing care within the legal scope of nursing practice.
- d. Demonstrate a professional demeanor in interactions with patients, families, and healthcare providers.
- e. Engage reflective thinking for the purpose of improving nursing practice.
- f. Value lifelong learning by initiating a plan for ongoing professional development.

Quality Improvement: Manage client care through quality improvement processes, informational technology, and fiscal responsibility to meet client needs and support organizational outcomes.

- a. Describe common quality measures encountered in clinical practice.
- b. Apply technology and information management tools to support safe patient care.
- c. Value fiscal responsibility in the delivery of patient care.

Collaboration: Demonstrate principles of collaborative practice within nursing and interdisciplinary teams, fostering mutual respect and shared decision-making to achieve stated care outcomes.

- a. Recognize the effect nursing and other interdisciplinary team members have upon care processes and outcomes for patients and families within any healthcare setting.
- b. Collaborate with members of the healthcare team to provide safe care.
- c. Appreciate different communication styles and cultural differences in team members.
- d. Apply management skills and principles of delegation when working with other members of the healthcare team.

e. Identify your own strengths and weaknesses to improve individual as well as team performance.

FINANCIAL REQUIREMENTS

In addition to the usual college tuition and fees, the nursing program requires preadmission testing and other expenses as identified below. Students are responsible for these costs, as well as transportation to and from the college and the health agencies used for clinical experiences. These include digital devices such as a laptop or tablet to use in the classroom and lab, uniforms/shoes, a watch, a stethoscope, standardized program progressive products, textbooks, electronic technology, Viewpoint Screening, and a document manager, CPR certification, Physical exam and Immunizations, tuberculosis testing, and Health Insurance. Tuition refunds depend on the academic calendar's last day to drop and receive a refund. Refunds for other costs such as health, physical examination, immunizations, CPR, and Viewpoint Screening are not refundable. Costs associated with textbooks, ATI/HESI, and uniforms (and accessories) depend on the individual vendor.

Estimated costs

Pre-admissions Testing (Test of Essential Academic Skills or TEAS/HESI)-\$53-\$70.00

Uniforms/Shoes/Watch/Stethoscope/pen light/pulse oximeter-Range to \$250.00

Elsevier-\$2624

Individual Health Insurance-Variable

Viewpoint Screening-\$89.00

Physical Exam, Immunizations, TB Test-\$250.00

CPR-\$150.00

Estimated in-state Tuition and Fees, varied Credit Hours per track and changes to prerequisites for 2025 @ \$167.40 per credit hour. * Subject to increases based on VCCS State Board and VHCC Local Board decisions.- \$11,550.60 range can vary

NCLEX-RN Application Fees *subject to increase based on VBON decisions-\$490.00

Transportation (to and from college and clinical agencies)-Variable

*Products and/or costs are subject to change based on program needs.

VHCC NURSING PROGRAM FACULTY

Dean of Health Programs Brigitte Casteel, MSN 276-739-2440

Program Chair Kathryn Justice, MSN 276-739-2481

Administrative Assistant Karin Widener 276-739-2439

Faculty Amy Hampton, MSN, RN 276-739-2483

Faculty Lizzie Goodpasture, MSN 276-739-2527

Faculty Aaron Osborne, MSN, RN 276-739-2400

Faculty Sherrie Phillips, MSN, RN 276-739-2549

Simulation Faculty Bethaney Hilt, MSN, RN 276-739-2544

Simulation Faculty Kayla Mullins, MSN, RN 276-739-2541

Clinical coordinator Debbie Aylor 276-739-2439

Adjunct faculty Names and contact information provided in each course

Student Engagement Hours

Full-time faculty members provide students with available office hours. Students can arrange appointments outside regularly scheduled hours with the instructor.

Academic Advising

Each student will be assigned an advisor to support academic progress and address student concerns. Course faculty members will advise students enrolled in their courses. The advisor will authorize all coursework the student plans to take and will guide future course requirements and career development.

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) Associate Degree in Nursing (ADN) program provides the following information for all prospective and current students:

The VHCC ADN program meets all Virginia Board of Nursing requirements for pre-licensure nursing programs in the Commonwealth of Virginia. In addition, the VHCC ADN program meets all requirements for nationally recognized accreditation by the Accrediting Commission for Education in Nursing.

The Commonwealth of Virginia participates, with 32 other states, in the National Council of State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN) National Licensing Compact (NLC), which allows nurses licensed in one state to provide nursing care across state lines in other compact states. The Uniform Licensing Requirements (ULRs) are found at [the Compact State PDF](#).

States currently in the NLC are found at: [NLC](#).

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: [Nurse Compact](#).

VHCC has not determined if the ADN program meets the requirements of any other states. This statement meets the US DOE regulation until further notice.

ENROLLMENT AND ATTENDANCE POLICIES

Enrollment Requirements

Admission and enrollment in the VHCC Nursing Program requires that the student register during the designated registration period and pay tuition before the published deadline. A student who fails to pay tuition before the deadline will be dropped from the class and must follow procedures for re-enrollment.

Course Delivery

Nursing courses are delivered face-to-face, online synchronously, hybrid, or a combination of delivery methods. Extenuating circumstances may alter the method of course delivery.

Class Attendance

Regular class attendance is essential to student success and is required for all nursing courses. Frequent absences may result in administrative withdrawal from a class and possible dismissal from the nursing program with the additional consequences of termination or reduction of programs of financial assistance, including veterans' benefits. Repayment of financial aid may be required if a withdrawal occurs. When an absence is necessary, students must complete an absence form and are responsible for the content missed, regardless of the reason for the absence. Any coursework missed and not subsequently completed will affect the course grade. The VHCC Policy for class attendance may be found in the VHCC Catalog.

Absence forms will be in Canvas course shells. Use this form when you miss class, lab, sims, clinical, or precepting. You must alert the course instructor(s) if missing class/lab/clinical/sim/precepting. In addition, you must alert the clinical coordinator if missing a clinical/sim/precepting.

The VHCC Catalog addresses the faculty-initiated withdrawal process. This link provides access to the VHCC Catalog. This content is located at the Withdrawal from a Course section. [VHCC Catalog](#)

GRADING

General Grading Scale

A = 100 – 92%
B = 91 – 84%
C = 83 – 80%
D = 79 – 70%
F = 69% and below
U = Unsatisfactory
S = Satisfactory

A point system equivalent to the above percentage score and letter grade is used in all nursing courses. Please see the course syllabus for the point spreadsheet for that course.

1. A grade of “C” is required for passing in all nursing and required general education courses.
2. A clinical rating of "satisfactory" is required for passing and will result in a final grade that corresponds to the theory average.
3. A clinical rating of "unsatisfactory" will result in a final grade of “F” regardless of the theory average.

Assessment of Student Learning

Faculty-prepared tests and Standardized External Product

testing: Tests/Quizzes will consist of multiple-choice, short-answer, fill-in-the-blank, or alternate-item formats, with an emphasis on critical thinking and application of knowledge. Alternate format questions can include multiple responses (multiple response items may require selection of a single correct response, have more than one correct response, or require all responses to be correct regardless of the number of possible responses), Fill-in-the-blank items that require typing in number(s) in a calculation item, Hot spot items that ask for identification of one or more area(s) on a picture or graphic, Chart/exhibit format where a problem is presented and will information in the chart/exhibit will be read to answer the problem, Ordered Response items that require order ranking or moving options to provide the correct answer, Audio item format presents an audio clip and requires headphones to listen and select the option that applies or, Graphic Options that present graphics instead of text for the answer options and they will be required to select the appropriate graphic answer.

The National Council of State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN) has revised the National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX), which began in 2023. This is called the Next Generation NCLEX. Question types include Matrix (multiple-response and multiple-choice), Drop-Down Cloze, and Bowtie. Faculty-prepared tests and standardized external product testing may include these question types.

Collaborative testing is an active learning activity faculty may elect to use in specific courses. Collaborative tests are intended to enhance student learning, collaboration, problem-solving, and critical thinking skills. Instructions for collaborative testing are provided in course syllabi.

All final examinations will be comprehensive, covering materials of the current semester and concepts from previous semester(s). The difficulty level of each test demonstrates the program's progression from simple to complex and the student's progression from novice to proficient learner.

Percent of questions on Tests by Level:

Fall semester I, Novice learner, K=20%; C=30%; A=50%

Spring, Semester II, Advanced Beginner, K=10%; C=30%; A=60

Fall, Semester III, Competent Learner, K=5%; C=15%; A=80%

Spring, Semester IV, Proficient Learner, A=100%

KEY:

K – Knowledge – This category may be called “Remembering” and is defined as recalling or retrieving previously learned information

C – Comprehension – This category may be referred to as Understanding and refers to comprehending the meaning, translation, interpolation, and interpretation of instructions and problems.

A – Application and Analysis. Applying refers to using a concept in a new situation and applying what was learned in the classroom to novel situations in the workplace. Analyzing refers to separating material or concepts into parts so that their organizational structure may be understood.

Tests will be administered online and rarely on traditional paper-and-pencil. The only answers accepted on paper-and-pencil tests will be those on the Scantron (test answer sheets). Online tests are set to show one question at a time, with no backtracking. All tests are timed. Online tests are administered via Respondus lockdown browser and monitor, if applicable.

Missed tests. If students miss a test, they must complete a makeup test. The format and date for makeup tests are at the instructor's discretion. Faculty will schedule quiz/test makeup dates and provide them to students on each campus. Two dates will be scheduled: the first for quizzes/tests missed before midterm, and the second for quizzes/tests missed after the midterm. Failure to take a makeup quiz/test as scheduled will result in a zero (0) grade for that quiz/test.

Test grades: Course faculty will provide test results to students and post them on the learning management system. Before posting test grades, the course faculty will review all scores for accuracy and make necessary revisions. Once a student receives a test grade, the student has two calendar weeks (10 working days) to review tests or to request that the faculty review the test items for scoring or accuracy. After two weeks, the test grade is final. Faculty may not be able to review tests and exams with individual students after two weeks from notification of the test (or course) grade. No test scores or grades will be given over the telephone or email.

Currently, all nursing courses are broken down as follows: Assignments 13%, Tests 80%, ATI/HESI proctored tests 7%, and clinical/SIMS is satisfactory or unsatisfactory.

Grading for lab, sims, and clinical is on a Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory basis. Successful completion of clinicals, lab, or sims requires an “S” (Satisfactory) achievement of the course/clinical objective. If a student receives an unsatisfactory, they will meet with faculty and discuss a remediation plan. Remediation is a one-time review and completion of a set plan, completed in its entirety and on time as set by faculty. If the student is unsatisfactory after remediation, they will receive an F for the assignment and/or the course.

Testing Center Online Test

1. Students are expected to be familiar with online testing. Please review VHCC Testing Center policies and hours. [VHCC Testing Center](#)
2. Sharing of test content outside the test site and the printing of any test material constitutes a violation of the honor code and will result in disciplinary action. This can result in dismissal from the nursing program. Please refer to the Academic Integrity section in the handbook.

Grades for course assignments.

Most courses include specific assignments that are graded as part of the total course grade. These activities are critical components of the final student evaluation/course grade and must be completed with a satisfactory grade. All written assignments must follow the American Psychological Association (APA) format unless otherwise specified by the instructor. A good source for APA style is the Purdue Online Writing Lab, [Owl Purdue](#)

Written assignments are due to the instructor at the beginning of the class period on the due date or at another time specified by the instructor. If the student anticipates a late written assignment, the student must discuss it with the instructor before the due date.

With a valid reason and at the instructor's discretion, an alternate date may be agreed upon. The individual must complete all written work without collaboration with another student unless the course assignment includes collaboration. Students should maintain copies of both the original ungraded assignment and the graded assignment.

Grades for written assignments.

Written work, as assigned by the instructor, is graded according to the Grading Rubric (guidelines) provided with the Learning Activity Instructions.

Late assignments.

(Addendum added 8/15/2026). Assignments are due by the due date assigned for each course. Late assignments will result in a zero. Students may submit one Lifesaver per course for a late assignment. If there are extenuating circumstances, students must email the course instructor

with details of their reason for late submission. Faculty will then discuss whether they will allow that submission to be graded. *Faculty will grade assignments within one week of the due date.*

Standardized progressive testing/achievement tests.

Standardized progressive testing utilizing Assessment Technologies Institute (ATI/HESI) resources is required throughout the program. These tests help students identify individual strengths and weaknesses. Each test has a minimum score, and a remediation plan will be developed for any student who does not meet it. These tests may be completed only in the testing center or with direct supervision from the course instructor. Students are responsible for the cost of progressive testing.

LABORATORY AND CLINICAL POLICIES

Students receive experience in a variety of clinical settings outside the traditional classroom. Students must review and sign an Assumption of Risk document. This form acknowledges the risks involved in clinical settings.

Laboratory and Clinical settings include nursing skills lab, simulation lab, and virtual simulation activities. Clinical settings include long-term care, acute care, and community settings. All lab and clinical settings are critical to the student's acquisition of knowledge and nursing care experience. If a student is more than 10 minutes late, they must miss the lab and make up the full lab time on another assigned date. If a student misses a lab, they must complete an absence form and make up the lab time on another assigned date. Absence forms will be located in Canvas course shells. Use this form when you miss class, lab, sims, clinical, or precepting. You must alert the course instructor(s) and any other instructor for the course/clinical/lab/precepting if missing class/lab/clinical/sim/precepting. In addition, you must alert the clinical coordinator if you are missing a clinical/sim/precepting. The student is responsible for initiating the form and submitting it promptly to schedule makeup for any absence.

To participate in the lab environment, the following guidelines must be followed:

Nursing Lab Safety Guidelines

1. The skills lab is a simulated healthcare environment. Treat it as an ACTUAL clinical experience—approach all lab situations and simulated scenarios as ACTUAL client interactions.
2. The lab is a safe learning environment, and all HIPAA/confidentiality rules apply. Do not discuss student performance during lab situations or simulated scenarios outside the lab setting.
3. Food and beverages are only allowed in non-client care areas (tables in the center of the room).
4. Students shall wash their hands or use hand sanitizer before using manikins or equipment in the lab.
5. Manikins shall only be touched with clean hands or gloves. Do not use povidone-iodine, surgical lubricant, ink, or markers on manikins. Only paper tape should be used.
6. Student IDs & Uniforms or appropriate attire should be worn in the lab as directed by the course instructor. Follow professional appearance guidelines as in the clinical setting.

7. Needles and syringes used for practice in the lab should be discarded in designated red sharps containers (not regular trash containers). In the lab setting, while practicing, use a one-hand scoop technique to recap a non-contaminated (sterile) needle. NOTE: Never recap a contaminated needle. Dispose it immediately in the sharps container.
8. Report any incidents, including glass or sharp injuries (whether clean or dirty needle or other sharp) to your course instructor and document on an Injury/Incident Report Form.
9. Non-reusable supplies (open alcohol swabs, ear specula, tape, used gloves, etc.) and other waste materials shall be disposed of in regular trash containers.
10. Equipment in the lab is purchased for simulation of client care and cannot be guaranteed as sterile or safe for human use. No person should use it.
11. Practice medications and IV fluids are for demonstration/simulation use only. They should not be ingested, injected, or applied in any manner. Medications and their labels are for simulation only and should not be considered accurate for any substance in the container (vial, capsule, inhaler, tablet, etc.).
12. Some items in the lab, including manikins, may contain latex. Students are responsible for reporting to the course instructor if a latex sensitivity/allergy exists or is suspected and for taking appropriate precautions. Latex-free gloves will be made available in the lab for those students with documented latex sensitivity/allergy.
13. All beds should be returned to the flat, lowest position with linens straightened, manikins in bed, side rails up, and overbed tables placed over beds.
14. Furnishings, including chairs, tables, curtains, linens, supplies, and equipment, are to be returned to their proper location when the lab is complete.
15. Any damage to or malfunction of equipment shall be reported to the course instructor immediately.

VHCC Simulation Lab Guidelines

1. In addition to Nursing Lab Safety Guidelines, the VHCC Simulation Lab follows additional guidelines to ensure a successful simulation experience.
2. Simulation time counts as clinical time. The VHCC RN program utilizes an enhanced ratio of 2:1 clinical to simulation time for select simulation scenarios conducted in the VHCC Simulation Lab. In addition to Virginia Board of Nursing regulations governing simulation in nursing education, the VHCC Simulation Lab follows the standards set forth by the International Nursing Association for Clinical Simulation and Learning (INACSL) Healthcare Standards of Best Practice. The VHCC Simulation Lab utilizes the 2:1 clinical-to-simulation ratio supported by the Virginia State Simulation Alliance (VASSA). It adheres to criteria identified as High Intensity Simulation-Based Education (HiSBE) by the recommendation for qualified scenarios.
3. Failure to complete all components of your simulation will result in an unsatisfactory clinical evaluation and an incomplete course grade.
4. The course instructor will provide students' simulation schedule.
5. Makeup during the semester is not guaranteed. Students should miss class only if they are sick or have an emergency. If an absence is unavoidable, students must complete and submit the Clinical Absence Form to simulation faculty, course instructors, and the

clinical coordinator. Absence forms will be in Canvas course shells. Use this form when you miss class, lab, sims, clinical, or precepting. You must alert the course instructor(s) if you miss class/lab/clinical/sim/precepting. In addition, you must alert the clinical coordinator if you miss clinical/sim/precepting.

6. Students must refer to the course's Simulation Canvas for specific information regarding simulation scenarios, prework assignments, and other important announcements. Students should download the Canvas application and receive email notifications. Students must check emails and notifications daily.
7. End times depend greatly on student needs and any technical issues that may occur.
8. Completed pre-work assignments must be submitted on Canvas by 4:00 pm on the day before the students' scheduled simulation date. If students do not submit these items on time, they will not be allowed to participate in simulations. An incomplete clinical grade will be given, and students risk failing the course.
9. Academic integrity policies apply to simulation assignments. Students may work together but submitted prework assignments must be the student's individual work. Refer to VHCC policy and course syllabi regarding academic integrity, plagiarism, and AI-generated assignments.
10. The dress code for the simulation lab is the same as that of clinical facilities. Students should bring any supplies used in a clinical setting, such as a stethoscope, pen light, etc.
11. Students are required to arrive at the simulation lab a few minutes before the start of their simulation to ensure they are prepared to start the simulation experience. If students are more than 10 minutes late, they will not be permitted to stay, and it will count as an absence.
12. If students know in advance that they will be unable to attend, they must find another student who is willing to switch dates. Both students must fully complete the Change in Clinical Assignment Form and submit it to the clinical coordinator for approval. Refer to the VHCC Nursing Handbook or Clinical Syllabus for clinical attendance requirements. If you are ill, you must send a timely e-mail to the simulation faculty and the course instructor(s). Failure to show or notify the lab is considered unprofessional and may result in clinical failure.
13. Any student who misses a simulation day will be required to complete Missed Simulation Assignments in addition to previously assigned work.
14. Students are NOT allowed to use cell phones or smartwatches during prebriefing/simulation/debriefing. Electronic devices should stay in airplane mode. Students are encouraged to notify friends and family that they are unavailable unless it is an emergency.

Lab, SIMS, and Clinical Attendance/Tardiness

This policy is based on the VABON regulations.

Section 18VAC90-20-120 Curriculum of the VABON: *A nursing education program preparing for licensure as a registered nurse shall provide a minimum of 500 hours of direct client care supervised by qualified faculty.*

Clinical hours to meet this VABON requirement are built into the VHCC Nursing Program. Inability to meet this clinical hour requirement will result in non-completion of the nursing program.

Students are expected to attend all scheduled clinical and lab experiences. Attendance includes arriving on time, being dressed according to the VHCC Nursing Program dress code (including a name badge), and being prepared to work. Students may be required to wear a mask and goggles for COVID-19 or other pandemic per state, local, or facility mandates. Students are also expected to bring their stethoscope, pin light, ink pen, note paper, and other equipment needed for clinicals. Report any absence to the appropriate lab or clinical instructor at least one hour before the student is expected to arrive. Students will submit an absence form if they miss any lab/clinical. The absence form will be in Canvas course shells. Use this form when you miss class, lab, sims, clinical, or precepting. You must alert the course instructor(s) if you miss class/lab/clinical/sim/precepting. In addition, you must alert the clinical coordinator if you are missing a clinical/sim/precepting. If a clinical is canceled because of a college closure, clinical site closure or cancellation, or faculty absence, a make-up session will be scheduled for all students in the affected clinical group(s). The nursing program must offer the number of clinical hours listed for each clinical course. However, there may not be an opportunity to schedule clinical or lab activities for individual student absences from assigned clinicals. In addition, clinicals are scheduled based on the availability of clinical instructors and clinical resources. This may result in Track 1 and Track 2 students doing clinicals during the weekend and/or Track 3 and Track 4 students having to do clinicals during the week. We will communicate different clinical days and times as soon as possible.

If you are more than 10 minutes late for the lab or clinical, you will not be allowed to stay for that lab and will make up the time as assigned by the faculty on the assigned date. If no makeup date is available, you may receive an incomplete for the course; two absences may result in failing the course. Lab and clinical absences will be documented, and the student will be held accountable to meet all lab and clinical attendance policy requirements. Adjunct clinical instructors will notify the course instructor within 24 hours of a student's absence to determine the action to be taken.

The course instructor and clinical coordinator will determine arrangements for making up missed laboratory or clinical time based on the availability of the laboratory or clinical site, faculty availability, and specific learner needs. Clinical access is limited to a specific number of days, and most clinical instructors are not contracted to teach more than the allocated clinical time. In addition, the number of students in each clinical group is limited by the VABON and/or the clinical agency. Making up missed clinical time may be difficult or impossible.

Students may be required to attend clinical activities at an alternative site or after all regularly scheduled clinical days are completed. Many clinical activities are only available once each year; in this situation, the student may have to wait a year to complete the clinical requirement and progress to the next course or graduation.

Action for missed lab, sims, or clinical activity.

1. When a clinical or lab absence is necessary, students must complete an absence form and will be assigned an activity or assignment related to the clinical or lab concept for the day missed and make up the missed hours as directed by the course faculty. The specific make-up activity/assignment is at the faculty member's discretion. Students are responsible for initiating the absence form and submitting it promptly to schedule make-up for the absence.
2. If students must miss more than one clinical day, the faculty will develop a remediation plan to address the clinical or lab absence issue. Depending on the number of hours missed and the total clinical hours for the course, students may be asked to withdraw after the second absence.
3. If students miss more than two clinical days for any reason, they may be asked to withdraw from the course. If the final withdrawal date has passed, the student will receive a failing grade in the course. Students should refer to the VHCC withdrawal policy.
4. Failure to notify the clinical instructor of absence may result in an unsatisfactory clinical grade.
5. Clinical dates may not be able to be made up during the semester, which would result in an incomplete for the student for that semester, and they may have to wait for the appropriate course or sites to be arranged, which could result in the inability to move forward with their current cohort.

Absence form:

You must alert the course instructor(s) if missing class/lab/clinical/sims/precepting. You must alert course instructors and the clinical coordinator if you are missing a clinical/sim/precepting. There is no guarantee of makeup dates; an incomplete may be awarded if no makeup days are available. Two absences may fail of the course. Please refer to the handbook for available actions. Students are responsible for initiating the form and submitting it promptly to schedule makeup for any absence.

Clinical change request form:

Complete this form if you switch clinical dates with another student who already has an assigned date. This form is not for a clinical makeup day. Include all identifying information and be specific about what you are changing and what it is. Then email this form to the student you are swapping with, your course instructor(s), and the clinical coordinator. One form will be sufficient for the request between students. Submit requests to change clinical assignments or swap clinical dates no later than the date grades are due for the semester. You will receive the form back with the approval decision.

Lab or Clinical Tardiness: If the student anticipates clinical tardiness, the faculty must be notified before the beginning of the lab or clinical day.

1. If students are more than 10 minutes late to their simulation, the incident will be counted as an absence; students may be sent home, and students must complete the requirements outlined above under “Action for missed clinical or lab activity.”
2. If a student is late for clinicals, simulation, or lab without notifying the instructor, the student risks being dismissed from the activity and receiving an unsatisfactory grade. The clinical or lab instructor will determine whether to send the student home or allow them to complete the remaining clinical or lab time.

3. Refer to the course syllabus for information regarding two or more incidents of tardy arrivals without instructor notification.
4. If students demonstrate patterns of behavior that include tardiness and absences, they are required to establish a remediation plan with the course faculty. They may be required to meet with the Program Director.

Clinical activities may be scheduled at times not specific to the curriculum track. For example, some specialty clinical activities are only available during the week, in the evenings, or on weekends.

Professionalism-Students must always display professionalism during the nursing program. If a student displays unprofessional/argumentative behavior at any time with anyone, including but not limited to faculty, staff, adjuncts, or clinical site staff, the first offense will result in a write-up, and the student must meet with the course instructor and/or director. The second offense will result in a write-up, a meeting with the Dean, and may result in being asked to withdraw from the program. A second offense could be escalated higher.

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. Clinical facilities may deny student access until no accommodation is needed. The following performance standards are consistent with those identified by the Southern Regional Education Board 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 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

These guidelines are essential elements of the eligibility requirements for clinical participation in the VHCC Nursing Program. A clinical syllabus is available for the program, and guidelines outlined in the document will be implemented and are subject to change.

Clinical Prerequisites and Documentation

The VHCC Nursing Program has contracts with clinical agencies to protect both students and patients. Contracts for each agency are available in the VHCC nursing office. Students may review them upon request. If students cannot comply with these contractual requirements, the program may attempt to accommodate them in another clinical agency. If no accommodation can be found, students 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 complete an orientation program before participating in activities at any clinical agency.
3. Clinical agencies require that all students have documentation of the ability to perform the physical demands required in direct patient care activities.
4. A proper uniform with an appropriate name tag must be worn when participating in clinical activities.
5. To participate in learning activities at the various clinical agencies, all students must provide documentation to ensure that they have completed the clinical agencies' requirements. Failure to maintain clinical requirements during the program will result in administrative withdrawal from the current clinical course. You may be required to repay financial aid if you withdraw. You must meet the stated deadlines to submit documentation of the clinical agency requirements. Document submission requirements, forms, and instructions are available at [VHCC Nursing](#)

Clinical Requirements

Required clinical documentation for first-year students. Specific documentation must be submitted by June 1 for Track 2 and Track 4 LPN-RN Transition students. Track 3 students must obtain the drug screen and background check by June 1, and the remaining clinical requirements will be due by August 1. Track 1 first-year students must complete their requirements by August 1. Submit documents through the student's Viewpoint Screening account.

Clinical agencies have established the following list of requirements:

- Verification of health insurance coverage (insurance identification card or letter from insurance company verifying health insurance coverage)
- Student Information and Physical Assessment form
- Current record of immunizations, including Hepatitis B, Measles-Mumps-Rubella, Varicella, Influenza, and COVID; documentation of immunization via blood titers may be accepted. An annual flu vaccine is required within the time range designated by the clinical facilities. Students should NOT obtain a flu vaccine until the instructor instructs them to do so.

- Tuberculosis (TB): Upon admission to the nursing program, a 2-step tuberculosis testing (Tuberculin Skin Test [TST] purified protein derivative [PPD]) must be completed. The 2-step tests involve the following:
- Step 1: a first visit to a health care provider in which PPD is injected into the forearm. Read the results between 48 and 72 hours after the injection.
- Results:
 - Positive: consider TB infection; no second TST needed. Evaluate for TB disease. *
 - Negative: a second TST is needed.
- Step 2: Retest in 1 to 3 weeks after the first TST result is read.
- Results:
 - Positive: consider TB infection; no second TST needed. Evaluate for TB disease. *
 - Negative: obtain documentation of results and download to Viewpoint.

*If a student has a positive TB test result, there must be a chest x-ray result along with a health provider clearance documented on the provider's letterhead.

- HIPAA certificate of completion; students will be instructed on how to do this in the first weeks of class.
- Copy of course completion card for Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR)- American Heart Association, Basic Life Support (BLS) for Healthcare Providers, completed and maintained throughout the program.
- Criminal Background Checks (CBC) – The purchase of Viewpoint Screening automatically initiates the CBC. The student must complete appeals of criminal background check results through Viewpoint Screening. Students with convictions of barrier crimes see Joint Statement 90-55: Joint Statement of the Department of Health and 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 Program Director of Nursing. Clinical affiliations must grant permission for clinical assignments for applicable students. Clinical facilities that will not approve student placement result in students being unable to complete program requirements and being ineligible to continue the program. If permission is not received and the required clinical hours cannot be obtained, the student is not eligible.
- Drug Screen – All students must submit a drug screen with no positive findings. Only drug screens compliant with Viewpoint Screening requirements will be accepted. The student must complete appeals of drug screening results through Viewpoint Screening. Students with positive drug screens are addressed individually and may result in being prohibited from clinical activities and therefore unable to complete the program requirements.
- Other documents: Student Statement of Criminal Background Check, Student Permission form, Standard of Safe Clinical Performance, Student Statement of Health, Fitness for Duty if applicable, Student Handbook Disclaimer. Students are expected to review, sign, and abide by these requirements.

Note: Our clinical agencies mandate clinical requirements and may change at any time. Students will be notified of new requirements as soon as possible.

In addition to the preceding documentation requirements, each student must maintain a student clinical competency checklist. The student will update and maintain this checklist throughout

the program, beginning with skills learned in the first skills or assessment classes. Each semester, students will upload the updated skills checklist to the applicable courses (NSG 106, 100, 170, 152, 115, 210, and 211) with the final completed checklist in NSG 270.

Before enrolling in nursing clinical courses, students must be compliant with all clinical requirements, with a few exceptions:

- Hepatitis B (Hep B) 3-dose vaccination series or 2-dose series
If the student does not have documentation of Hepatitis B immunization or a laboratory report of a positive hepatitis B surface antibody titer, begin the immunization process immediately. It is imperative to attend to this requirement **immediately** to meet clinical participation deadlines. Clinical activities are required to complete clinical courses and progress in the curriculum. The Hep B 3-dose series requires 6 months to complete. The first dose must be administered one month before the second dose. The third and final dose must be administered five months after the second dose. The 2-dose series is given 1 month apart.
- Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) training will be announced by faculty and must be completed and uploaded to Viewpoint by the stipulated deadline.
- The faculty will announce deadlines for flu vaccinations.
- Failure to maintain clinical requirements will result in administrative withdrawal from the nursing program. Repayment of financial aid may be required if a withdrawal occurs. Please see details under the heading, **Clinical Pre-Requisites and Documentation**.

Required clinical documentation for second- and third-year students. Students are responsible for maintaining clinical requirements throughout the program. All documentation must be submitted through Viewpoint for Track 1 students entering the nursing program in 2024 by August 1. All other students will continue to use Castle Branch until graduation. Failure to comply will result in administrative withdrawal from the program. You may be required to repay financial aid if you withdraw.

- Student Statement of Health
- Student Statement of Criminal Background
- CPR (American Heart Association, Basic Life Support for Health Care Providers, current for the duration of the program).
- Annual Tuberculosis renewals consist of an annual screening and review of Tuberculosis Overview for health care providers. Complete the VHCC Nursing Student Tuberculosis screening form. “Yes” responses require further action by the students. Upload the completed TB Screening form to Viewpoint.
- Proof of flu vaccination each year by submitting the record of immunization based on clinical agencies' requirements. Students **should not** obtain a flu vaccination until faculty announce the dates.

Required clinical documentation for readmitted students. Students who have NOT maintained continuous enrollment in a clinical course must resubmit clinical documentation. Students

readmitted into the fall semester must submit clinical documentation by August 1. Students readmitted into the spring semester must submit paperwork by January 2. Students who have not been continually enrolled in the nursing program must complete the same documentation as a new first-year student. A recheck of criminal background/drug screen can be purchased at a lower rate.

Assumption of Risk

Students will be asked to sign an *Assumption of Risk* form before they participate in clinicals. By signing this form, students acknowledge: 1) responsibility for their actions and 2) assumption of risks involved with the nursing program in the clinical setting.

Clinical Evaluation

Student performance in the clinical area will be formally evaluated at the end of each clinical rotation. Students may be denied continued enrollment in a clinical nursing course if, after reasonable accommodation, the clinical faculty concludes students are unable to perform safe clinical practice. A final grade of "S" is required to pass the nursing course. If the student receives a "U" for clinical, they will fail the course.

Fitness for Duty

Clinical agencies require all students to provide evidence that they meet the fitness-for-duty or physical requirements of their agency. If a student experiences an illness, injury, hospitalization after experiencing an illness, injury, hospitalization, or other circumstance that results in either a physical or psychological limitation(s) or an absence from the program, the student is required to submit to the course instructor(s) and clinical coordinator, a *completed Fitness for Duty - Return to Classroom and Clinical Courses* form from the appropriate health care provider before returning to the classroom or clinical setting. If a health care provider limits the student's ability to perform direct patient-care activities, the student will be restricted accordingly. In addition, the rules and regulations of participating clinical agencies will determine whether a student with limitations imposed by their health care provider can participate in the clinical experience.

Clinical Agency Assignments and Clinical Orientation

Requests for assignments to specific agencies cannot be honored. Faculty may assign students to clinical agencies at the beginning of the semester, regardless of the sections they signed up for. Students who fail to complete the clinical requirements will NOT be allowed to attend clinicals until the clinical documentation has been completed and successfully submitted through Viewpoint Screening. Failure to complete clinical activities by the required date will fail of the course, regardless of other course grades.

Clinical agencies require students to complete an orientation to the clinical agency. There is no exception to this requirement; students must complete the agency-required orientation. Each instructor will distribute information on directions to the health care agency-designated parking

areas. The clinical instructor will make clinical assignments; only the clinical instructor can change assigned clinical times.

VHCC Nursing Program Dress Code

The VHCC Nursing Program expects students to present a professional and positive image in clinical settings. High standards of conduct and appearance reflect the nursing program, the profession, and the agency in which practice occurs. The VHCC Nursing-approved uniform will be the official dress for the VHCC Nursing Pinning Ceremony.

The VHCC Nursing-approved uniform or agency professional attire, along with a photo ID, must be worn in all clinical settings, including clinical simulation and clinical orientation activities. If a student must return to campus during or after clinicals, the VHCC Nursing scrub jacket may be worn over the approved uniform or professional attire.

The clinical or simulation lab instructor has final judgment on the appropriateness of student attire and corrective action for dress code infractions. Unprofessional attire may result in dismissal from the clinical or simulation activity, resulting in a grade of “U” for that clinical day, and the student will be considered to have an unexcused absence. Any missed clinical and/or simulation time must be made up to progress in the program. See Lab and Clinical Attendance/Tardiness.

Photo ID.

A photo ID is considered part of the uniform or agency dress code attire and is to be fastened above the waist in clear view in all clinical settings. The photo ID should not be worn in settings other than the clinical or laboratory setting. Some clinical agencies will make a photo ID for students for that agency. Students are to turn in these IDs to their clinical instructor at the end of their time with the program.

VHCC Nursing Program Uniform.

The VHCC Nursing uniforms consist of black pants or a skirt, a hunter green top, and a black scrub jacket with the VHCC Nursing logo. Only designated VHCC Nursing Program uniforms may be worn while participating in clinicals, on or off campus. Uniforms may be purchased from a local uniform shop identified by the nursing program.

Uniforms are always to be clean and pressed. Uniforms must fit properly. Wear skin-toned, full-length, non-sheer stockings/hosiery when a skirt is preferred. Do not wear sweaters or hoodies with the uniform. Undergarments and/or cleavage must not show when leaning or bending over. Appropriate undergarments are white, black, or neutral colored and fit appropriately. Black scrub jackets are required and are the only acceptable garment to wear with the uniform when not engaged in direct patient care. Shoes are to be black leather or rubber, closed-toe, clean, and in good repair. Shoes must be made of material that will not absorb biohazardous materials and can be cleaned; shoelaces must be clean. Black knee-highs/socks (that come above the ankle) are required. High-top sneakers, canvas shoes, or shoes with sport logos are not permitted. If headwraps are worn, they must be black to match the uniform.

A watch with a second hand, wedding rings, and small white or yellow metal earrings (one small stud per earlobe) may be worn. Necklaces **are not** permitted unless they are Medic Alert. **No body piercing jewelry (no exceptions) other than earlobes.**

Hair is to be clean, neat, and well-groomed. Hair must clear the uniform collar and be controlled so it will not cause contamination or become contaminated. Shoulder-length hair or longer must be pulled back behind the ears off the neck when in the clinical lab setting. Males are expected to be clean-shaven or have facial hair/mustache and beards no longer than ½” and neatly trimmed. Hair must not be of an extreme color or style (not pink, blue, etc.).

Fingernails are to be clean, groomed, and manicured to the tips of the fingers. No dark nail polish, artificial nails, tips, or fingernail jewelry are allowed in the clinical setting. Makeup must be minimal. No perfume, cologne, aftershave, or scented lotions are to be worn. Noxious or unpleasant body odors and poor dental hygiene are unacceptable. Showering/bathing and the use of deodorant/antiperspirant are expected.

Uniform accessories.

Each student is expected to have the following accessories when participating in clinical activities:

- Bandage scissors (optional)
- Black pen
- Penlight
- Stethoscope
- Watch with a second hand
- Calculator (optional)

Personal appearance and behavior.

- Eating, drinking, and gum chewing are not allowed in a clinical setting.
- Personal phone calls and visitors in the clinical or lab setting are not permitted except in an emergency. Cell phones must be silent, and calls should not be accepted or personal contacts made, including text messages, during clinical or lab times.
- Cell phones may be used as personal handheld devices for access to nursing references only if approved by the clinical faculty and the clinical agency. This approval must be received in advance for each clinical assignment. Students who use their cell phone for personal purposes or without prior permission may be dismissed from clinical and will be required to make up missed time.
- Students are asked to follow the clinical site policy regarding smoking. Most clinical agencies do not allow smoking on the premises.

Agency Professional Attire.

Some agencies prefer students to wear professional attire instead of VHCC Nursing student uniforms. The instructor will inform students when this is the case and what attire the agency will offer. The appearance must be clean and neat. Generally, jeans, sweatshirts, sport

clothing, underwear-type shirts, see-through clothing, shorts, sleeveless shirts, or any clothing which exposes a bare midriff, back, chest, or underwear are prohibited. Skirts must be knee length or longer, pants must be ankle length and must fit properly, be clean and pressed, and be representative of conservative attire. A student entering a clinical agency in street clothing for any activity as a nursing student (e.g., orientation) must dress professionally and wear the program's scrub jacket and photo ID required by the agency.

National Student Nurses' Association (NSNA) Code of Academic and Clinical Conduct

The National Student Nurses Association provides a code of academic and clinical conduct for nursing students. All VHCC Nursing Program nursing students must always follow these ethical principles. Any breach of the code will be documented in the student's permanent record, and appropriate action will be taken.

NSNA Code of Academic and Clinical Conduct Preamble

Nursing students have a responsibility to society to learn the academic theory and clinical skills needed to provide nursing care. The clinical setting presents unique challenges and responsibilities when caring for patients across a variety of health care environments. The Code of Academic and Clinical Conduct is based on the understanding that, as nursing students, we agree to uphold the trust society has placed in us. The statements of the Code guide the nursing student in developing an ethical foundation and need not be limited strictly to the academic or clinical environment; they can also support the holistic development of the person.

A Code for Academic and Clinical Conduct for Nursing Students

As students are involved in clinical and academic environments, we believe that ethical principles are a necessary guide to professional development. Therefore, within these environments, we:

1. Advocate for the rights of all clients.
2. Maintain client confidentiality.
3. Take appropriate action to ensure the safety of clients, self, and others.
4. Provide care for the client in a timely, compassionate, and professional manner.
5. Communicate client care in a truthful, timely, and accurate manner.
6. Actively promote the highest level of moral and ethical principles and accept responsibility for our actions.
7. Promote excellence in nursing by encouraging lifelong learning and professional development.
8. Treat others with respect and promote an environment that respects human rights, values, and choice of cultural and spiritual beliefs.
9. Collaborate in every reasonable manner with the academic faculty and clinical staff to ensure the highest quality of client care
10. Use every opportunity to improve faculty and clinical staff understanding of the learning needs of nursing students.

11. Encourage faculty, clinical staff, and peers to mentor nursing students.
12. Refrain from performing any technique or procedure for which the student has not been adequately trained.
13. Refrain from any deliberate action or omission of care in the academic or clinical setting that creates unnecessary risk of injury to the client, self, or others.
14. Assist the staff nurse or preceptor in ensuring that there is full disclosure and that proper authorization is obtained from clients regarding any form of treatment or research.
15. Abstain from the use of alcoholic beverages or any substances in the academic and clinical setting that impair judgment.
16. Strive to achieve and maintain an optimal level of personal health.
17. Support access to treatment and rehabilitation for students who are experiencing impairments related to substance abuse and mental or physical health issues.
18. Uphold school policies and regulations related to academic and clinical performance, reserving the right to challenge and critique rules and regulations as per school grievance policy.

National Student Nurses' Association (2009). *A Code for Academic and Clinical Conduct for Nursing Students*.

PROGRAM PROGRESSION, REAPPLICATION/READMISSION

Program Progression

All courses in the curriculum, both general education and nursing, must be completed to meet prerequisites. Students must earn a minimum grade of “C” (80 %) in all nursing courses and a minimum grade of “C” in all non-nursing courses and maintain a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.0 to remain eligible for continued enrollment in the nursing program. In addition, during NSG 106, NSG 115, and NSG 170, a Comprehensive Drug Calculation Exam (CDCE) will be administered to verify skills. Students must score at least 90 percent of the maximum on the CDCE and may take no more than three attempts to earn a passing grade in the course. 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. Students are allowed only 2 failures.

Clinical performance in a course is graded as Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory. A student who does not meet the clinical learning outcomes will fail the course, regardless of the didactic grade.

The following are program progression policies according to the VCCS Common Curriculum:

A student is allowed two enrollments for the traditional student Tracks 1 and/or Track 3 and two enrollments for the LPN to RN Tracks 2 and/or 4. A withdrawal is considered an enrollment unless the student has mitigating circumstances, which will be considered with proper documentation and faculty approval. If a student is considering withdrawal, they must be in good standing, provide documentation of circumstances, obtain approval by the faculty consortium, and agree to readmission terms set forth by the faculty. Students should consider the 60% timeline when considering withdrawal and financial aid. At any time, a student can be

administratively withdrawn for failure to adhere to policy; this may result in an F and financial responsibility of the student to pay for the course. Withdrawals may impact the student's ability to return to the program based on space availability. On-time completion is vital to student success, and students must wait a minimum of 3 years from the start date before they may return to the program. If the request to return is more than 3 years later, the student will restart the program from the beginning.

If a student requests an incomplete due to extenuating circumstances and receives approval, a set end date will be placed for completion. Failure to complete the required tasks by the designated end date will result in a failing grade. The student is responsible for communicating with faculty. The student will follow the same progression policy as stated for readmission and transfer.

- Any student who drops or withdraws from NSG 106 or NSG 200 must also drop or withdraw from NSG 100 due to the inability to complete clinical requirements.
- A student may continue in NSG 200 regardless of dropping or withdrawing from NSG 100 and/or NSG 106.
- Any student who drops or withdraws from NSG 252 or NSG 270 must withdraw from the other course.
- Students who are not successful in any first semester nursing (NSG) course must reapply to the nursing program. Readmission must occur within 3 years of completion of NSG 100 or NSG 115; otherwise, the student will have to repeat all nursing courses.
- A student who wishes to reenter the nursing curriculum at any level must write a letter to the program director requesting readmission in the semester before the semester of enrollment.
- Once the letter of request is received, students will be advised of the requirement to complete applicable proctored tests and other assignments as directed by faculty on an individual student basis. A guide will be provided to students recommending study and preparation steps before taking the designated proctored test. Certain scores will be required and provided for the student to achieve for consideration. Students are responsible for the cost of the testing.

Guidelines for Requesting Readmission

- Students requesting readmission must follow these guidelines:
- Indicate in writing to the VHCC Nursing Program Director the desire to be readmitted, including the Track and specific course needed. The letter must address the steps taken to correct previous deficiencies. State in the letter the steps you have taken to ensure success if reenrollment is approved. This letter is the student's request for readmission and will be presented to the faculty for the final decision. Appropriate formatting, correct grammar, and spelling are important factors to consider in preparing the letter. Students may be asked to attend a meeting with faculty to discuss readmission.
- For re-enrollment in fall and spring, letters must be received at the end of the applicable semester. Requests after these deadlines will not be considered until the following year. Requests may be sent via email or by U.S. mail to the Program Director at Virginia Highlands Community College, PO Box 828, Abingdon, VA 24212.

- Purchase and complete the assigned test /assignments. Students who do not earn the required score on tests or assignments will not be considered for readmission.
- It is the student's responsibility to confirm that the VHCC Nursing Program office has received readmission requests.
- Readmissions are reviewed and approved by faculty. The decision to readmit will be based on the student's letter requesting return, GPA, test results, assignments, additional requested data, prior performance in the nursing program, and availability of clinical and classroom space. Students will be notified of the decision concerning the readmission request by phone call, letter, or email before the first day of the requested class.
- Students enrolled at VHCC repeating courses are required to agree to readmission conditions. Failure to follow the agreed-upon conditions may result in administrative withdrawal. Repayment of financial aid may be required if a withdrawal occurs.
- 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 beginning the repeated course.
- Students who were unsuccessful in 100 will reapply to the nursing program with a nursing application and all requirements for initial admission; however, if they passed NSG 130, NSG 106, and NSG 200, they can get credit for those courses once they pass the skills checkoff, Head to Toe checkoff, and CDCE for semester 1 on a specified date per the program instructors. If they are not satisfactory in their checkoffs or CDCE, they will repeat those courses and possibly additional courses in addition to the NSG 100. If students were unsuccessful in NSG 100, NSG 106, NSG 200, and NSG 130 courses, they will repeat those courses with NSG 100 upon readmission to the program.

Students who are unsuccessful in NSG 106, 130, and 200 will repeat the course if space is available. Students may be required to complete additional assignments before the program considers them for a retake.

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

- Repeating a course with a grade below "C";
- Withdrawal from a nursing course;
- Cumulative GPA below 2.0.

Any student who is not enrolled due to being unsuccessful or withdrawing from a clinical course for one semester or longer must meet clinical agency requirements, including a new criminal background check and drug screen; documentation of current CPR and health insurance; a statement of health; and a physical before returning to re-enroll in nursing courses. A student who is not enrolled in a clinical course for one semester or longer will be required to demonstrate competency in critical nursing skills, including head-to-toe assessments, before re-enrolling in the program. Failure to demonstrate skills/assessment competencies before the course begins will result in the student not being allowed to re-enroll in the program. If competency is not demonstrated, the student may be required to repeat additional courses, e.g., NSG 106 and/or NSG 200, and additional courses as set forth by the director.

Priority of readmission.

Students are allowed readmission in the program based on space availability and ranked by cumulative GPA in the following order of priority:

1. VHCC Nursing Program returning students who have dropped out of the nursing curriculum with a passing grade before taking the courses for which they have applied and are still eligible to continue in the program.
2. VHCC Nursing Program returning students who have been unsuccessful in the course for which they are applying and are still eligible to continue in the program.
3. Transfer students.

Inter-Track Transfer

In extenuating circumstances, a student may submit a written request to the Director for transfer to a different track in the nursing program. The request must include an explanation of the extenuating circumstances and the steps the student will take to ensure success if the request is granted. The faculty will consider the request. Readmission decisions depend on the availability of clinical and classroom space; decisions are not typically made until final-semester grades have been submitted. The student will be notified of the decision in writing before the first day of the class requested.

Students requesting transfer from another institution

Students requesting transfer from another institution will be advised of courses that may transfer based on course content. The student must also be in good standing at the previous institution, and this will require a letter from the previous institution stating the student is in good standing and would be allowed back into the previous program, if indicated. Proper documents, TEAS/HESI test scores, a timeline of less than 3 years from the beginning of the program, documentation of less than 12 months separation from nursing courses, and all other requested documents must be submitted before meeting with the student. If a student meets the criteria to transfer, they will follow the same criteria that readmission students will follow. If the student cannot meet the criteria, they will be considered for enrollment as new students and start in the track that best meets their request.

PROFESSIONAL AND ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Professional Integrity

Stress is a reality for nursing students and professional nurses. How individuals respond during highly stressful situations is paramount to effectiveness as professionals and nurses. During difficult situations in the classroom or in a clinical setting, students must be mindful of their communication with peers, staff, faculty, patients, and other healthcare providers.

Nursing students must function as professionals in academic and health care settings. This professionalism includes exhibiting sensitivity and concern, maintaining therapeutic relationships, patient confidentiality, and following facility policies and rules. Unprofessional behavior may result in academic or legal consequences. Students should take a moment to reflect

on what they are about to say, particularly in difficult situations. Profanity and threats will not be tolerated and will be managed according to college policy, as well as the policies of the healthcare agency when applicable. This includes e-mail or letters written by students as well as social media.

Nursing students must demonstrate accountability for nursing practice by functioning within legally and ethically prescribed limits determined by the Commonwealth of Virginia Board of Nursing Statutes and Regulations; the American Nurses Association Code for Ethics and NSNA Code of Academic and Clinical Conduct (see earlier section). Failure to comply with these standards will result in immediate dismissal from the nursing program.

Laws Governing the Practice of Nursing and Health Professions in General

(Excerpts) Chapter 30 or Title 54.1 of the Code of Virginia

§ 54.1-3007. Refusal, revocation or suspension, censure or probation.

The Board may refuse to admit a candidate to any examination, refuse to issue a license, certificate, or registration to any applicant and may suspend any license, certificate, registration, or multistate licensure privilege for a stated period or indefinitely, or revoke any license, certificate, registration, or multistate licensure privilege, or censure or reprimand any licensee, certificate holder, registrant, or multistate licensure privilege holder, or place him on probation for such time as it may designate for any of the following causes:

1. Fraud or deceit in procuring or attempting to procure a license, certificate, or registration;
2. Unprofessional conduct;
3. Willful or repeated violation of any of the provisions of this chapter;
4. Conviction of any felony or any misdemeanor involving moral turpitude;
5. Practicing in a manner contrary to the standards of ethics or in such a manner as to make his practice a danger to the health and welfare of patients or to the public;
6. Use of alcohol or drugs to the extent that such use renders him unsafe to practice, or any mental or physical illness rendering him unsafe to practice;
7. The denial, revocation, suspension, or restriction of a license, certificate, registration, or multistate licensure privilege to practice in another state, the District of Columbia, or a United States possession or territory; or
8. Abuse, negligent practice, or misappropriation of a patient's or resident's property.

(Code 1950, § 54-353; 1970, c. 116; 1979, c. 5, § 54-367.32; 1982, c. 598; 1988, c. 765; 1989, c. 278; 2003, c. 249; 2005, cc. 610, 924.)

§ 54.1-3008. Particular violations; prosecution.

A. It shall be a Class 1 misdemeanor for any person to:

1. Practice nursing under the authority of a license or record illegally or fraudulently obtained or signed or issued unlawfully or under fraudulent representation;

2. Practice nursing unless licensed to do so under the provisions of this chapter;
 3. Knowingly employ an unlicensed person as a professional or practical nurse or knowingly permit an unlicensed person to represent himself as a professional or practical nurse;
 4. Use in connection with his name any designation tending to imply that he is a professional nurse or a practical nurse unless duly licensed to practice under the provisions of this chapter;
 5. Practice professional nursing or practical nursing during the time his license is suspended or revoked;
 6. Conduct a nursing education program for the preparation of professional or practical nurses unless the Board has approved the program;
 7. Engage in the practice of massage therapy or hold himself out as practicing massage therapy unless he holds a license as a massage therapist issued by the Board.
- B. The provisions of this section shall apply, mutatis mutandis, to people holding a multistate licensure privilege to practice nursing.

Code 1950, § 54-359; 1970, c. 116; 1982, c. 598, § 54-367.35; 1988, c. 765; 1996, c. 166; 2004, c. 49; 2016, c. 324

VABON (2018). Laws governing the practice of nursing, §§ 54.1-3000 and Chapter 30 of Title 54.1 of the *Code of Virginia*. Retrieved from [VBON Nursing Laws](#)

Regulations Governing the Practice of Nursing, Virginia Board of Nursing

§§ 54.1-2400 and Chapter 30 of Title 54.1 of the Code of Virginia 18 VAC-90-19-230. Disciplinary provisions.

A. The board has the authority to deny, revoke, or suspend a license or multistate licensure privilege issued, or to otherwise discipline a licensee or holder of a multistate licensure privilege upon proof that the licensee or holder of a multistate licensure privilege has violated any of the provisions of §54.1-3007 of the Code of Virginia. To establish allegations to be included in the notice of hearing, the board has adopted the following definitions:

1. Fraud or deceit in procuring or maintaining a license means, but shall not be limited to:
 - a. Filing false credentials;
 - b. Falsely representing facts on an application for initial license, reinstatement or renewal of a license; or
 - c. Giving or receiving assistance in taking the licensing examination.
2. Unprofessional conduct means, but shall not be limited to:
 - a. Performing acts beyond the limits of the practice of professional or practical nursing as defined in Chapter 30 (§54.1-3000 et seq.) of Title 54.1 of the Code

of Virginia, or as provided by §54.1-2901 and 54.1-2957 of the Code of Virginia;

- b. Assuming duties and responsibilities within the practice of nursing without adequate training or when competency has not been maintained;
- c. Obtaining supplies, equipment, or drugs for personal or other unauthorized use;
- d. Employing or assigning unqualified people to perform functions that require a licensed nursing practitioner;
- e. Falsifying or otherwise altering patient, employer, student, or educational program records, including falsely representing facts on a job application or other employment-related documents;
- f. Abusing, neglecting, or abandoning patients or clients;
- g. Practice of a clinical nurse specialist beyond that defined in 18VAC90-19-220 and § 54.1-3000 of the Code of Virginia;
- h. Representing oneself as or performing acts constituting the practice of a clinical nurse specialist unless so registered by the board;
- i. Delegating nursing tasks to an unlicensed person in violation of the provisions of Part VIII (18VAC90-19-420 et seq.) of this chapter;
- j. Giving to or accepting from a patient or client property or money for any reason other than a fee for service or a nominal token of appreciation;
- k. Obtaining money or property of a patient or client by fraud, misrepresentation, or duress;
- l. Entering into a relationship with a patient or client that constitutes a professional boundary violation in which the nurse uses his professional position to take advantage of the vulnerability of a patient, a client, or his family, to include but not limited to actions that result in personal gain at the expense of the patient or client, a nontherapeutic personal involvement, or sexual conduct with a patient or client;
- m. Violating state laws relating to the privacy of patient information, including but not limited to §32.1-127.1:03 of the Code of Virginia;
- n. Providing false information to staff or board members in the course of investigation or proceedings;
- o. Failing to report evidence of child abuse or neglect as required in § 63.2-1509 of the Code of Virginia or elder abuse or neglect as required in § 63.2-1606 of the Code of Virginia; or
- p. Violating any provision of this chapter.

B. Any sanction imposed on the registered nurse license of a clinical nurse specialist shall have the same effect on the clinical nurse specialist registration. VABON (2017). Regulations governing the practice of nursing, §§ 54.1-2400 and chapter 30 of Title 54.1 of the *Code of Virginia*. Retrieved from [VBON Nursing Laws](#)

American Nurses Association, Code of Ethics for Nurses
(Approved January 2015)

Provision 1. The nurse practices with compassion and respect for the inherent dignity, worth, and unique attributes of every person.

Provision 2. The nurse's primary commitment is to the patient, whether the patient is an individual, family, group, community, or population.

Provision 3. The nurse promotes, advocates, and protects the patient's rights, health, and safety.

Provision 4. The nurse has authority, accountability, and responsibility for nursing practice; makes decisions; and acts consistently with the obligation to promote health and to provide optimal care.

Provision 5. The nurse owes the same duties to self as to others, including the responsibility to promote health and safety, preserve wholeness of character and integrity, maintain competence, and continue personal and professional growth.

Provision 6. The nurse, through individual and collective efforts, establishes, maintains, and improves the ethical environment of the work setting and the conditions of employment that are conducive to safe, high-quality health care.

Provision 7. The nurse, in all roles and settings, advances the profession through research and scholarly inquiry, professional standards development, and the generation of both nursing and health policy.

Provision 8. The nurse collaborates with other health professionals and the public to promote human rights, promote health diplomacy, and reduce health disparities.

Provision 9. The profession of nursing, collectively through its professional organizations, must articulate nursing values, maintain the profession's integrity, and integrate principles of social justice into nursing and health policy.

(American Nursing Association, 2015). American Nurses Association. Code of Ethics for Nurses. Retrieved from [Nursing World](#)

Academic Integrity

All forms of dishonesty, including cheating, plagiarism, knowingly furnishing false information to the College, and forgery, alteration, or use of college documents or instruments of identification with the intent to defraud.

1. Plagiarism is the appropriation of passages, either word for word or in substance, from the writings of another and the incorporation of those passages as one's own in written work offered for credit. VHCC assumes that the written work offered for credit is the student's own unless proper credit is given to the original author by the use of quotation marks and footnotes or other explanatory inserts.

2. Collaboration with another person in the preparation or editing of notes, themes, reports, or other written work offered for credit is prohibited unless such collaboration has been specifically approved in advance by the instructor. Examples of collaboration include extensive reliance on another's ideas in preparing a creative assignment and receiving undue assistance with preparing or editing written materials.

3. Giving or receiving, offering or soliciting information on any quizzes, tests, or examinations is prohibited; this includes the following:

- a. Copying from another student's document/work and/or submitting a purchased document/work.
- b. Use of prepared materials during the examination
- c. Collaboration with another student during the examination
- d. Buying, selling, stealing, soliciting, or transmitting the contents of an examination
- e. Substituting for another person during an examination or allowing such a substitution for oneself.
- f. Bribery of any person to obtain examination information.

Unauthorized testing/examination behaviors.

Unauthorized testing/examination behaviors will be addressed. Examples of unauthorized testing examination behavior include but are not limited to conversing with another person, passing or receiving information/material to or from another person, or temporarily leaving an examination site to visit an unauthorized site; having a cell phone, tablet, smartwatch or earbuds; having food or drinks in the testing area; wearing hats, caps, hoodies or other head coverings/garments that cover the head or face. Online testing behavior is monitored and reviewed. Any questionable behavior will be investigated, and the VHCC sanction policy will be followed.

When testing is administered in a proctored environment, whether by the faculty, a faculty designee, or testing center staff, the student will not violate testing rules established in the syllabus, handbooks, or testing center policies. If a test proctor has reason to suspect irregularities at the testing center, including cheating, the assessment will be immediately stopped, and the test will be closed. A formal report will be made to the course faculty. Faculty will discuss the incident with the students.

Unauthorized test review behavior. Test reviews can be valuable learning opportunities, but students must conduct themselves in a manner that protects test security. Unless the faculty member conducting the review permits it, students should not engage in side conversations during the review. Examples of unauthorized test review behavior include but are not limited to leaving the site of the review with the test or notes regarding the test unless approved by the instructor, leaving the site of the review before turning in test, having a cell phone, tablet, smartwatch or earbuds; having food or drinks in the review area; wearing hats, caps, hoodies or other head coverings/garments that cover the head or face.

Failing to report acts of academic dishonesty.

Students who witness or become aware of any form of academic dishonesty are expected to report it to the faculty. If faculty discover a student has failed to report any form of academic dishonesty, the student will be dismissed from the program.

VHCC and the VHCC Nursing Program identify academic dishonesty as misconduct subject to disciplinary action. The following sanctions may be imposed:

- A. Admonition: An oral or written statement to a student that they are violating or have violated College rules and may be subject to more severe disciplinary action.
- B. Disciplinary Probation: Exclusion from participation in extracurricular activities of the College, including the holding of any student office, for a period of time not exceeding one academic year.
- C. Restitution: Required reimbursement for damage or misappropriation of property. This may take the form of appropriate services or other compensation.
- D. Suspension: Exclusion from attending the College as a student for a definite period not to exceed one academic year.
- E. Dismissal: Termination of student status for an indefinite period. The conditions of readmission, if any, will be stated in the letter of dismissal.
- F. Interim Suspension: If, in the opinion of the Vice President of Instruction and Student Services, the continued presence of any student on the campus may reasonably pose a threat to, or interfere with, the College's mission and/or the rights of others, a student may be suspended from the College pending the right to a hearing. The Vice President shall first make a reasonable effort to advise the student orally of the reasons for the suspension and to allow the student to explain or rebut. The informal opportunity does not provide the student the right to present witnesses, to cross-examine adverse witnesses, or to require the presence of counsel. As soon as possible after the suspension, the student will have the right to call for a hearing. At such a hearing, the affected student shall have all the rights described under section 6.7.3 of the VHCC Faculty/Staff Manual.

Cheating on any exam, quiz, lab practical, lab test, homework, or any other type of examination, as well as plagiarism of thoughts, words, or ideas, is prohibited. Students are expected to maintain a high level of integrity in their academic pursuits. Academic honesty is essential for maintaining the relationship of trust that is fundamental to the educational process and to the healthcare delivery system. Academic dishonesty violates one of the most basic ethical principles of an academic community. Students who cheat in any way will be dismissed from class and receive an "F" for the course, and risk dismissal from the program and the college. This policy is consistent with VHCC conduct requirements.

Illegal Substance Policy

Students are expected to follow the VHCC Student Handbook policy regarding illegal substances and the VHCC Controlled Substance and Alcohol Policy. ([VHCC Catalog Illegal Substance Policy](#), [VHCC Controlled Substance and Alcohol Policy](#)).

This policy applies to all clinical and classroom settings. Clinical agencies reserve the right to request a random drug screen at any time a student is in a clinical agency; the student is responsible for the cost of random drug screening. The student must follow the agency's directions; failure to comply will result in dismissal from the program.

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

Traditional Face-to-Face Courses and Online/Blended Courses

The learning management system, CANVAS, is utilized for each course. Each student must obtain a VHCC Login username and password. Students should be prepared to access CANVAS and email daily. Once a username and password are established, the student may log into CANVAS and locate tutorials for using the learning management system.

Technology Requirements and Recommendations

- All students must purchase a laptop to use in the classroom and lab. This device will be used to download eBooks, complete assignments, and take tests throughout the nursing program. Tablets and Chromebooks are not recommended because they cannot run some of the required applications. Students will also need a microphone (internal or external) and a webcam with a minimum resolution of 320x240 VGA (internal or external). The following are technology requirements:
 - Refer to the VHCC IT Help Desk for the most up-to-date information: [VHCC IT doc](#)
- Mobile Operating System Native App Support - There are free Apple and Android mobile apps for Canvas, Zoom, and Respondus (Respondus only supports Apple iPad)
- ATI/HESI- Chrome web browsers work with most of the program's products. Some applications trigger pop-ups and require you to allow pop-ups from ATI/HESI in the settings. If you have difficulty with applications, try a different web browser.
- NOTE: As of January 5, 2019, Android apps require version 5.0 or later and iOS apps require version 12 or later. Both Android and iOS support the two most recent versions of their respective operating systems.
- **Email Access and Experience:** Students must have sufficient email and Internet access to do all class activities on schedule. Students are responsible for finding alternative resources when necessary. Note: Students must use their college email. Faculty have been instructed to only respond to students using college email addresses.
 - Check CANVAS course sites and email daily.
 - Students **must** be able to perform the following email functions:
 - Check for and access new email
 - Save copies of all incoming mail for your records
 - Send email and save a copy of all outgoing mail

- Send, receive, read, and save attachments to email.
- Print email messages and file attachments.
- Scan documents and save to PDF files.

Virus Scanning Software: Install up-to-date virus scanning software, such as Norton Antivirus or McAfee, on the computer and keep virus data files current. You can download antivirus software from the Help Desk support web page. If a document infected with a computer virus is sent to an instructor, the instructor will have to delete the document and will be unable to grade the work submitted.

Software programs: The following software can be downloaded from the Help Desk support web page. Software programs used include but are not limited to the following:

- Microsoft PowerPoint
- Microsoft Word
- Adobe Reader
- Microsoft Excel

Frequently Used Websites:

- [Youtube](#)
- Kahoot
- Brainfuse
- CDC
- NCSBN
- VA Board of Nursing

Use of Technology in the Classroom and Lab/Clinical Areas

Cell phone and electronic device usage in the classroom and college laboratory setting. All cell phone and other electronic device use is prohibited during class, clinical, and simulation laboratory activities, tests, and test reviews unless authorized by the instructor for classroom/lab activities. During testing and test review/remediation, all personal belongings including cell phones, electronic devices, book bags, and purses will be placed in a secure area of the classroom. Students may retrieve these items after all testing or review is complete. Laptops are permitted for notetaking or research but should be in sleep mode during interactive activities. Students are expected to participate in interactive discussions, and using laptops or mobile devices for texting can impede classroom participation. Any student who violates this policy may be asked to leave the classroom. Any student using a cell phone or other electronic device during a test/exam or during a test review will receive a grade of zero for that test or exam and an F for the course. Please refer to the **Academic Integrity** section in this handbook.

EMAIL AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Students must exercise extreme caution and carefully review any information distributed via email or posted on publicly accessible websites. As students in the VHCC Nursing Program, they represent themselves, their peers, their college, and others in the nursing profession.

VHCC Nursing Program Email Policy

Electronic mail or “email” is an official method of communication at the Virginia Community College System (VCCS). All official email communications are distributed only to VCCS email accounts. Students are expected to check their campus email accounts daily. Faculty members, administrators, and staff will respond only to messages sent from VCCS email addresses.

Students who choose to have their VCCS email forwarded to a private (unofficial) email address outside the official college network address do so at their own risk. It is essential to observe appropriate etiquette when sending emails (including those sent via electronic devices) related to your academic/professional matters. Emails are more formal and should be written professionally. Provide the reason for the email, the specific course identification, and your student ID number. Always use email etiquette (R. Nordquist (2017). 10 Tips on how to write a professional email. Retrieved from [ThoughtCo](#)
Allow 24-48 business hours for faculty responses.

Social Networking

VHCC Nursing supports the use of social media to reach audiences, including students, prospective students, faculty, and staff. This policy applies to School of Nursing students who engage in internet conversations for school-related purposes or activities, such as interactions in or about clinical and didactic course activities. HIPAA and FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act) protect the distribution of sensitive and confidential information, whether communicated through traditional channels or social media. **Violation of HIPAA will result in immediate dismissal from the nursing program.** A HIPAA violation may result in legal action by the patient, the healthcare facility, and the federal government. A student will be subject to liability if individual postings are found defamatory, harassing, or in violation of any other applicable law.

General Information

Social media are communication mechanisms designed for dissemination through social interaction and created using highly accessible and scalable publishing techniques. Examples include, but are not limited to, Wikipedia, Second Life, Flickr, blogs, podcasts, Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, Snapchat, Topix, TikTok, and Instagram.

While this policy may need to be modified as new technologies and social networking tools emerge, its core purpose will remain protecting sensitive and confidential information. Students should always represent the VHCC Nursing Program and the community college fairly, accurately, and legally while protecting the reputation of the program and the college. Students may also be liable if individual postings contain confidential or copyrighted information (e.g., music, videos, text).

Information posted on social media sites may be publicly accessible and can be traced back to its source or the individual who posted it. Because social media typically enables two-way communication, you have less control over how others use posted materials. Once information is posted on the internet, it becomes available to the whole world.

The VHCC Nursing Program adheres to the guidelines provided by the National Council of State Boards of Nursing regarding use of social media. Students are advised to review the National Council of State Boards of Nursing **Guidelines for Using Social Media (NCSBN, 2018)**.

VHCC NURSING PROGRAM CURRICULUM TRACKS

The VHCC Nursing Program offers four curriculum tracks that allow students to complete the program at a pace that best fits their individual needs. Tracks 1 and 2 are available to students who plan to complete the program through the traditional format, taking a full credit load and most nursing classes offered on a day schedule. Tracks 3 & 4 are based on a part-time schedule, with most nursing classes offered in the evening/weekend schedule.

Refer to the VHCC catalog for track information and progression: [VHCC Catalog](#).

COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

The VHCC Nursing Program curriculum consists of 28 credit hours of general education. Courses in the sciences and humanities provide the foundation for the nursing curriculum. The State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV), VABON, and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) are all involved in determining course requirements for degree programs. Students must complete courses taught by general education faculty.

Nursing courses are sequential and build on content from previous classes. Therefore, they must be taken in the order listed in the curriculum.

Nursing (NSG) course details can be found at: [VCCS Nursing Course Details](#).

LICENSURE APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

Application for NCLEX-RN Examination

Successful completion of the nursing program provides students with an opportunity to apply for the National Council of Licensure Examination (NCLEX) for Registered Nurses. The VABON provides instructions for online NCLEX-RN applications for VHCC Nursing graduates whose legal residence is in Virginia before graduation (https://www.dhp.virginia.gov/nursing/nursing_forms.htm).

1. Completing the NCLEX and state licensure application process is the responsibility of the student.
2. Virginia students graduating in May **do not** request transcripts from the college. The VHCC Nursing program Director sends completion information to VABON, confirming program graduation.
3. Students who reside in states other than Virginia should contact their state's Board of Nursing for detailed instructions.

REGULATIONS GOVERNING THE PRACTICE OF NURSING

VIRGINIA BOARD OF NURSING

§§ 54.1-3017 and Chapter 30 of Title 54.1 of the Code of Virginia

Qualifications of applicants for registered nurse's license; examination; graduates of foreign nursing education programs.

A. An applicant for a license to practice professional nursing shall submit evidence satisfactorily to the Board that such applicant:

1. Has completed an approved four-year high school course of study or the equivalent as determined by the appropriate educational agency;
2. Has received a diploma or degree from an approved professional nursing education program;
3. Has passed a written examination as required by the Board; and
4. Has committed no acts which are grounds for disciplinary action as outlined in this chapter.

B. The Board shall consider and may accept relevant practical experience and didactic and clinical components of education and training completed by an applicant for licensure as a registered nurse during his service as a member of any branch of the armed forces of the United States as evidence of the satisfaction of the educational requirements for licensure.

C. An applicant who graduated from a nursing education program in a foreign country may be required to pass the Commission on Graduates of Foreign Nursing Schools Qualifying Examination before admission to the examination for licensure in the Commonwealth.

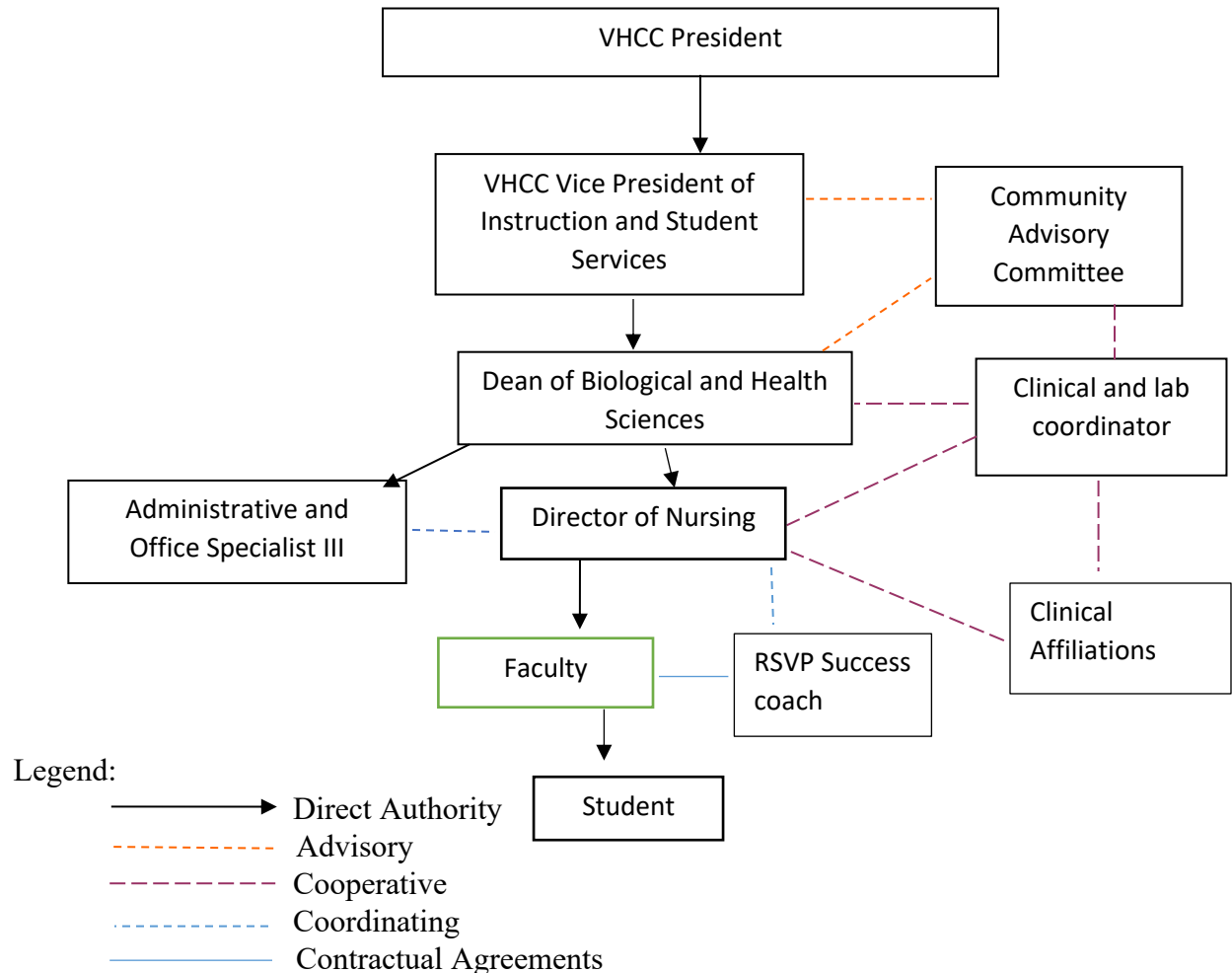
(Code 1950, § 54-346; 1970, c. 116; 1979, c. 5, § 54-367.13; 1982, c. 598; 1988, c. 765; 2011, c. 390.)

VABON (2025). Regulations governing the practice of nursing, §§ 54.1-3017 and chapter 30 of title 54.1 of the Code of Virginia, April 21/2025. Retrieved from [VBON Nursing Laws](#)

Virginia Highlands Community College Nursing Program

Organizational Chart

Picture of organizational chart



COMMUNICATION EXPECTATIONS

Effective communication in nursing is critical to safe, high-quality patient care and interdisciplinary collaboration. Likewise, nursing students are expected to do the same. Students' concerns and complaints are important to faculty and should be communicated professionally. Faculty expect students to share concerns and complaints professionally, face-to-face or via email (Refer to the email policy above). Faculty will address student concerns with the student and/or class as applicable. If students do not feel that concerns have been adequately addressed and/or resolved, they are expected to follow the established line of communication (hierarchy). All

concerns will be addressed promptly; however, some concerns may take longer to resolve than others.

The line of communication begins with the faculty of the course or the Clinical Instructors and proceeds as follows until the situation is resolved or the question is answered:

Student use of the communication line reflects professionalism. Students who initiate their communication at a higher level should expect to be referred to the appropriate person. If a problem persists and cannot be resolved, students must follow the VHCC Student Grievance Procedure.

STUDENT GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

All grievances should be handled in accordance with the grievance policy as outlined in the VHCC Catalog. The purpose of the VHCC student grievance procedure is to provide an equitable, orderly process for resolving grievances at Virginia Highlands Community College. Students may also request a final grade appeal. The method is outlined in the VHCC College Student Handbook, Grade Appeal Procedure.

MISCELLANEOUS PROGRAM and COLLEGE POLICIES

VHCC Nursing Club

The purpose of the Nursing Club is to aid in the development of the whole person, their professional role, and their responsibility for the health care of people in all walks of life. Nursing Club bylaws are established and posted in nursing courses. The function of the VHCC Nursing Club is to promote and encourage participation in community affairs and activities towards improved health care and the resolution of related social issues; represent nursing students to facilitate communication and professionalism in formal faculty meetings and other events coordinated by VHCC Nursing faculty; promote and encourage student participation in interdisciplinary activities; promote and encourage recruitment efforts, participation in student activities and educational opportunities regardless of the person's race, color, creed, sex, lifestyle, national origin, age or socio-economic status; provide students the opportunity to benefit from the experience of self-governance on a professional level so that they may be better able to participate on a professional level after graduation; and to give a welcoming reception for incoming students and a reception for graduation students.

All students are members of the nursing club. Students elect club officers, including a President, Vice-President, Treasurer, Recording Secretary, one student representative to the VHCC Nursing faculty organization, and one (1) member at large. Nursing Club student representatives or designees are invited to faculty meetings and serve as liaisons between the Nursing Club and the VHCC Nursing faculty organization. These representatives convey the Nursing Club's ideas, issues, and concerns to the VHCC Nursing faculty organization and inform the Nursing Club of pertinent information and decisions made by the VHCC Nursing faculty organization.

Student Accommodations.

[Support Services Link](#)

Financial Aid

Please see the Financial Aid Officer for financial assistance and scholarships.

Graduation

Submit a graduation application to the Enrollment Services Office by the announced deadlines. Students are responsible for filing the application before the deadline and ensuring they meet all current program requirements. In addition to the VHCC Nursing program requirements, VHCC may require competency testing during the final semester and before graduation.

The nursing faculty believes that college graduation ceremonies recognize academic achievement. All nursing graduates are encouraged to participate in the commencement exercises to signify the accomplishment of a goal and the beginning of a promising career.

VHCC NURSING PROGRAM PINNING CEREMONY

Each VHCC Nursing Program graduating class is honored with an annual pinning ceremony. Students wear the official VHCC Nursing Program uniform and are pinned with the nursing program pin, symbolizing their status as VHCC Nursing Program alumni. The ceremony will be held near the end of the spring semester. Family and friends are encouraged to attend.

VIRGINIA HIGHLANDS COMMUNITY COLLEGE NURSING PROGRAM

HANDBOOK DISCLAIMER & SIGNATURE PAGE

This Virginia Highlands Community College Nursing Student Handbook is provided to you as a guide and to ensure you understand the academic and conduct expectations Virginia Highlands Community College has for you during your enrollment in the program. There is no mutuality between you and the College concerning it. Thus, your reliance upon the information contained within it when making academic decisions does not constitute, and should not be construed as, a contract with the College. Furthermore, the College reserves the right to make changes to this handbook at any time, unilaterally and without notice; however, students will not be held responsible for associated conduct expectations contained in such changes until notified. You are responsible for regularly reviewing the terms of this policy.

Your signature on this page is your acknowledgment that you have received and agreed to abide by the Virginia Highlands Community College Nursing Student Handbook.

Printed Name

Signature

Date

Semester/Year