



VALDOSTA
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Graduate Student Handbook
School of Nursing
Valdosta State University

2014

School of Nursing

Graduate Student Handbook

Office:
Health Science and Business Administration Bldg
2525 North Patterson St.
Valdosta, Georgia 31602
Phone: 229-333-5959

Office Hours: 8:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Monday – Thursday
8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Friday

"No person in the United States shall, on the grounds of race, color, sex, religion, creed, national origin, age, veteran status, or handicap, be excluded from employment or participation in, be denied the benefits of, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity conducted by the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia or any of its several institutions now in existence or hereafter established. (The Board of Regents for the University System of Georgia, Sec 401.2, p.1)"

Welcome Students!

Welcome to the School of Nursing. We want you to enjoy your time at Valdosta State University School of Nursing. If you have questions or problems, the faculty and administration of the College are available to assist you in any way that we can.

This handbook was prepared to assist you during your program of study. It contains policies, procedures and general information relative to the College of Nursing and Health Sciences. In addition, you are referred to the Valdosta State University Graduate Catalog and the Valdosta State University Graduate Student Handbook for other information.

Best Wishes as you progress through the program.

Dr. Sheri Noviello
Dean
College of Nursing and
Health Sciences
E-mail: srnoviello@valdosta.edu
229-333-5959

Dr. Bonni Cohen
Associate Dean
School of Nursing
Email: bscohen@valdosta.edu
229-333-5959

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THE COLLEGE

COLLEGE OF NURSING AND HEALTH SCIENCES MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Valdosta State University College of Nursing and Health Sciences is to serve society through the promotion of excellence in health care: preparing outstanding health professionals, developing health care knowledge, advocating for the underserved, and advancing our professions.

PHILOSOPHY OF THE SCHOOL OF NURSING

Nursing is a caring, client-centered profession, grounded in a body of knowledge based on theory and research, using humanistic values of altruism, equality, justice, and human dignity to care for people. Functioning within a professional community, nursing values evidence-based practice, ethical codes, an interdisciplinary culture, self-regulation, and authority over practice. Providing an important, unique service, the nursing profession uses a body of theoretical knowledge from analytic and engaged ways of knowing applied to practice. Professional registered nurses are inherently concerned with persons as whole beings in continuous interaction within multiple contexts and systems.

Health is defined by individuals, groups, families, and communities within the context of their unique environments. Environment refers to socioeconomic, sociopolitical, physical, psychosocial, and health care changes that create the dynamic world which provides our daily context of living. The essence of nursing is to help persons attain and maintain wellness in every dimension of their being. Professional registered nurses foster healing environments for diverse populations and strive to promote wellness and improve quality of life for people across the lifespan.

As regional leaders for nursing excellence and learner-centered education, we believe education transforms all involved, including a diverse population of learners, faculty, and clients. Nursing education is committed to a technologically-enhanced learning community that promotes learner success. We believe learners should be actively engaged, self-directed, accountable, and committed to lifelong learning. Faculty members strive for instructional excellence, offer academic assistance, facilitate learning, and provide enrichment for learners by coaching, guidance, and mentorship. Our purpose is to educate and graduate registered nurses who are competent, caring, holistic, and reflective.

Baccalaureate nursing education prepares safe, beginning generalists for entry into professional nursing practice. Among the important roles of professional registered nurses educated at the baccalaureate level are competent care provider, health care coordinator, manager, leader, change agent, and research consumer. Graduate nursing education builds on baccalaureate nursing education and prepares professional registered nurses for advanced nursing practice in specialized clinical and functional roles. Advanced nursing practice demands complex

intellectual analysis, effective management and leadership, scholarship, and interpersonal competencies. Graduate nursing education operationalizes the roles of advanced nursing practice and lays the foundation for doctoral study.

Master of Science in Nursing OBJECTIVES

1. Synthesize knowledge from a variety of evidence (conceptual models and theories from nursing and related disciplines, practice wisdom and ethics) in advanced nursing practice.
2. Employ scientific inquiry and other ways of knowing to validate, refine, and develop knowledge relevant to advanced nursing practice and the delivery of healthcare services.
3. Effect health policy and promote change through leadership, innovation, and management expertise.
4. Practice advanced nursing in collaborative relationships across disciplines and with communities.
5. Demonstrate healthcare informatics literacy within the context of advanced nursing practice.
6. Promote culturally competent systems that reflect the global context of health.
7. Implement strategies for ongoing personal and advanced professional development through professional involvement, lifelong learning, and fostering an appreciation for doctoral study.

ADMISSION, PROGRESSION, AND GRADUATION

ADMISSION

The admission policy of the School of Nursing Graduate Program is congruent with the admission policy of Valdosta State University. Application is made through the Graduate School, which is located at 903 North Patterson Street, phone 229-333-5694.

To be considered for admission to the Master of Science in Nursing, an applicant must have

1. graduated from a NLNAC-accredited or CCNE-accredited Bachelor of Science in Nursing program
2. a GPA of 3.0 or higher on a 4.0 point scale
3. minimum scores on the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) of 400 (if taken before November 2011) or 146 (if taken after November 2011) on the verbal section and 3.5 on the analytical writing section. A Miller Analogies Test score of 400 or higher (or equivalent) will be accepted as an alternative to the GRE.
4. evidence of current Georgia licensure as a registered nurse
5. three letters of recommendation from persons whose observations of the applicant's character and abilities are current. Letters of recommendation must be accompanied by the required General Graduate Recommendation Form.

Please see the Graduate Catalog for information on types of admission, including probationary, non-degree, and transient admission.

http://ww2.valdosta.edu/catalog/1213/grad/documents/GRAD_139-168.pdf#page=18

Foreign students are required to pass the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). See the Graduate Catalog for minimum acceptable scores.

On admission to the graduate nursing program students are assigned a faculty advisor to assist them in developing an individualized program of study. The Plan of Study (POS) form (available from the College of Nursing and Health Sciences MSN website : <http://www.valdosta.edu/colleges/nursing-and-health-sciences/programs/master-of-science-in-nursing-m.s.n./welcome.php> that demonstrates how students will fulfill their degree requirements. A Plan of Study form should be completed and signed by the student and graduate faculty advisor prior to completion of the second semester of graduate study. If changes are needed to the coursework listed on the Plan of Study form it should be re-written by the student and graduate advisor and attached to the original Plan of Study. Changes to the plan of study may result in delay of program completion.

Students have seven years from admission to the graduate program to complete the requirements for the degree. If the degree is not completed within the seven-year limit, coursework more than seven years old may need to be repeated.

ADMISSION OF REGISTERED NURSES WITHOUT THE BSN

To facilitate rapid progression through the baccalaureate program, a state-wide articulation model has been adopted. Registered Nurses wishing to take advantage of this opportunity for educational progression must meet the criteria for the RN-BSN Articulation Model. The School of Nursing also offers a pathway to Registered Nurses who wish to earn both the BSN and MSN in an accelerated program.

In addition to completion of the Core Curriculum, admission criteria include:

1. regular admission to Valdosta State University,
2. documentation of completion of accredited ACCNE or NLNAC ADN program,
3. unencumbered Georgia RN license,
4. having met the criteria for the RN-BSN Articulation Model,
5. earned minimum of "C" in each science course (Science courses may not be repeated more than one time),

Selection of the Masters track should be made by the second term of RN to BSN study. Students who desire to complete the accelerated BSN and MSN program must make application to the Graduate School during the semester in which all BSN Nursing Courses are successfully completed.

Candidates should meet with the College of Nursing and Health Sciences Graduate Coordinator prior to completing the Graduate School application.

PROGRESSION

To remain in good standing students must:

- attain a minimum grade of "B" in each nursing course; and maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher for all graduate courses. Students receiving two grades of "C" or below ("D," "F," "WF," or "U") will be dismissed from the program.

In addition students must present and maintain documentation of:

1. unencumbered Georgia RN Nursing license.
2. current physical examination by a licensed health care provider affirming that they are free from communicable disease and able to function safely in a clinical environment.

3. Vaccination, immunity or exemption for:
 - a. Measles, Mumps and Rubella
 - b. Tetanus toxoid,
 - c. Hepatitis B vaccination,
 - d. Varicella titer
 - e. TB (students should receive TB screening annually for students with negative test). Accepted tests include:
 - i. a single blood assay for M. tuberculosis (BAMT) TB blood test (QFT-GIT or T-Spot)
or
 - ii. 2 step tuberculin skin test (TST)
or
 - iii. Chest Xray followed by a Symptom check list annually
4. Drug testing as required by affiliating clinical agencies.
5. Maintain current certification in American Heart Association Healthcare Provider CPR
6. Maintain current malpractice insurance with minimum coverage of \$1,000,000/\$3,000,000.
7. Maintain current health insurance. Nursing students are mandated by the USG to maintain health insurance. Registration will be automatic and the charge will be applied to your student bill. Waivers may be applied for via the USG waiver portal. See VSU web site for information. <http://studentcenter.uhcsr.com/valdosta>.

Proof of all progression requirements is due the first class day of each TERM.

Full time graduate students normally take between 9 and 12 credit hours each term. The program is planned using a hybrid format with in-class meetings on weekends approximately once a month during the semester and the balance of coursework on-line.

During or on completion of the last term of coursework, each student must successfully pass a comprehensive or standardized examination.

Optional The thesis is a scholarly, empirical investigation of a phenomenon of concern in nursing. The project is a theory based intervention that addresses a nursing clinical or role problem. Students should discuss this option with a Graduate faculty member of their choice and, if approved, enroll in thesis or project hours under that faculty member's direction.

READMISSION

If dismissed from the program, students must wait a minimum of 1 calendar year and obtain approval from the College of Nursing and Health Sciences before applying for readmission. Readmission is not guaranteed and prior academic performance and conduct in the program will be considered.

If any courses have been taken at another institution during the non-enrolled period, official transcripts of these courses must be submitted.

APPLICATION FOR GRADUATION

To be eligible for graduation students in the Graduate Program must meet the following requirements in addition to any other requirements mandated by the Graduate School and listed in the Valdosta State University Graduate Catalog.

1. MSN candidates must have achieved a cumulative graduate GPA of 3.0 or better on a 4.0 scale as well as a “B” or better in all graduate nursing courses. **No course grade below a “C” will be credited toward graduation.**
2. Satisfactory completion of the comprehensive or standardized examination.

Students must submit an application for graduation one semester prior to their expected graduation date. Students are responsible for obtaining the application form from the Office of the Registrar and contacting their School of Nursing faculty advisor to schedule a meeting to review their academic record and complete the application for graduation.

It is the student's responsibility to submit the completed application for graduation, with all appropriate documentation and fees, to the Office of the Registrar by the required date. **Students are expected to be aware of and meet all deadlines for graduation.**

MISCELLANEOUS EXPENSES

Graduate nursing students will incur expenses throughout the program above the fees identified in the Valdosta State University Bulletin. Listed below are some of the major additional costs.

Transportation to and from clinical practica is the responsibility of the student. Travel to some clinical agencies may require 1 to 2 hours' time and public transportation is not available. It is, therefore, necessary that students have (or can arrange for) dependable transportation.

Professional liability insurance must be purchased and maintained throughout the College of Nursing and Health Sciences academic program. Proof of this insurance coverage is required before students can participate in clinical experiences.

Certification in American Heart Association Healthcare Provider Cardiac Life Support (CPR) is also a requirement during the program. The cost of the certification is determined by the offering agency.

Following expenses that will be incurred during the nursing program:

- Cost of Books
- Immunization Tracker \$37
- Electronic Portfolio
- Name Tag (to be purchased at bookstore)

There are costs occurring at the end of the program related to graduation. They are:

- Exit Exam – approximately \$65
- Graduation fee - approximately \$40

- Composite Photos (optional) - approximately \$28 - \$30

Many students discover that a personal computer is an asset to their studies. The University provides computer labs; however, for many students the convenience of having a computer outweighs the additional expense. Students will be required to follow policies related to using BlazeVIEW, email and computing resources on campus. Information related to requirements for using BlazeVIEW may be found on the VSU Distance Learning web site at : <http://www.valdosta.edu/academics/elearning/main/current-students/welcome.php> and the Information Technology website on policies at <http://www.valdosta.edu/administration/it/its/css/helpdesk/guides/technology-purchases/computers.php>

CLASS INFORMATION

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Academic integrity and honesty are vital to the purposes of the University and the nursing profession. The University policy regarding student conduct and academic irregularity is stated in the Valdosta State University Student Handbook and is applicable to nursing students. The School of Nursing has adopted an Honor Code (see Appendix B).

Students should be aware that sanctions in the nursing profession are imposed because of the vital nature of health care as it affects client well-being. Due to the unique nature of the clinical experience in the nursing program and to the relationship of responsibility for the welfare of the client, it is necessary for the College of Nursing and Health Sciences to expand upon the University's definition of academic irregularity. While the University relates academic irregularity to behaviors, such as plagiarism or cheating, the College of Nursing and Health Sciences must also relate violations to unsafe, irresponsible, and nonprofessional behavior in the clinical setting. Academic irregularity in the clinical setting includes, but is not limited to, failure to assume and/or maintain responsibility for assigned client(s) and the failure to report errors made in providing client care. Students must attend clinical prepared to provide competent care and conform to ethical standards explicit in the ANA Code of Ethics and contained within the guidelines of the Nurse Practice Act. This means that students must provide safe client care during assigned clinical hours unless and until relieved by clinical faculty and are required to notify clinical faculty immediately concerning any error they believe they have made or might have made in the clinical area so that attention may be given to the affected client(s).

A single violation of academic integrity in the clinical setting may disqualify a student from continuing in the College of Nursing and Health Sciences at Valdosta State University.

CLASS ATTENDANCE

Students are expected to demonstrate punctual attendance during all classroom and clinical experiences. Absence of more than 20% of classroom or clinical hours in each course may constitute failure of the course; and excessive tardiness may, at the instructor's discretion, result in a lower grade in the course.

Grading Scale

The grading scale in the College of Nursing, for both Graduate and Undergraduate students, is:

A	=	90–100
B	=	80–89
C	=	74–79
D	=	66–73
F	=	65 & below

Grades of C, D, or F are not sufficient for progression in the curriculum.

ADA STATEMENT

Students requesting classroom accommodations or modifications due to a documented disability must contact the Access Office for Students with Disabilities located in the Farber Hall. The phone numbers are 229-245-2498 (V/VP) and 229-219-1348 (TTY).

CLINICAL INFORMATION

CLINICAL DRESS

Graduate students are expected to adhere to professional attire and behavior standards. Dress requirements specific to individual clinical courses are included in course syllabi. Students are to wear VSU School of Nursing name badges during all clinical experiences.

DRUG TESTING AND CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECK

All students and faculty are subject to the rules and regulations of the clinical facilities with which we affiliate. Students will submit to drug screening and criminal background checks as requested by clinical agencies at their own expense. Inability to access clinical facilities due to drug screening or criminal background check may be grounds for dismissal from the program.

HEALTH CARE LICENSES

Students must maintain current licensure as a Registered Nurse in Georgia prior to beginning graduate nursing courses and throughout the graduate nursing curriculum. Any change in licensure status, including renewal, shall be reported to the Assistant Dean's office within 72 hours of occurrence.

HEALTH AND ACCIDENT INSURANCE

All graduate nursing students must enroll in the mandatory Student Health Insurance Plan as required by the Board of regent of the University System of Georgia or **request a waiver each semester**. Students are responsible for the cost of treatment of any accident or injury occurring while a student in the College of Nursing and Health Sciences, whether the incident occurs in the classroom, clinical experiences, or personal activities. Students enrolled in clinical nursing courses must maintain personal health/accident insurance. Proof of coverage from a carrier of choice must be presented on the first day of class each semester. Any student without insurance or the required proof will not be allowed to attend clinical until such requirements are met.

PROFESSIONAL LIABILITY INSURANCE

Students must show proof of professional liability insurance, minimum amount of \$1,000,000/\$3,000,000 on the first class day of each semester. Any student without insurance or without the required proof will not be allowed to attend clinical, including mandatory orientations, until this requirement is met. It is the responsibility of the student to maintain coverage throughout the nursing curriculum and to have the documentation available on request of any appropriate person. Students are encouraged to develop a portfolio of this and related information.

BASIC CARDIAC LIFE SUPPORT

Students enrolled in clinical nursing courses must maintain current certification for basic cardiac life support – adult one and two rescuer, infant, and child CPR and obstructed airway. It is the nursing student's responsibility to acquire this certification and maintain it at all times. Proof of certification for the duration of the semester is required for participation in all clinical practicums. Students must have valid and current documentation of the certification and may be required to successfully demonstrate the ability to give cardiopulmonary resuscitation according to the American Heart Association Healthcare Provider criteria. Students must show a current certification card, good for the entire semester, to the nursing instructor or designee on the first day of class each semester and must submit a photocopy of a current certification card to be placed in the student's file in the College of Nursing and Health Sciences.

CLINICAL EXPERIENCES

Graduate students must plan all clinical experiences with the faculty. Selected experiences must be consistent with course objectives. It is preferred that clinical experiences occur in agencies different from the one in which the student is/has been employed. In no case should students obtain clinical experience within the actual setting (unit, department, clinic, et cetera) in which they currently work. **No time during which students are being reimbursed (employment time) may be counted as clinical time for course credit.**

The College of Nursing and Health Sciences maintains memoranda of understanding (MOU) with over 90 clinical agencies. **Clinical experiences will be obtained as directed by course faculty. Clinical experiences generally occur within the VSU 41 county service area.**

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES WHEN WORKING WITH A PRECEPTOR

Students are assigned a preceptor for selected clinical experiences. A standardized clinic log records activities and incorporates evaluation of achievement. Students are expected to maintain communication between the preceptor and faculty about any unusual circumstances. **Students are to meet the responsibilities assigned by the preceptor, to maintain prompt and consistent attendance, and to keep the preceptor fully informed of all clinical activities.** Students may not work in the clinical area if the preceptor is not available. The faculty member is responsible for evaluating the experience and will consider input from both the student and the preceptor and others as appropriate. Students need to complete an evaluation of the preceptor, the clinical area, and the practicum at the end of the clinical experience.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Students enrolled in the College of Nursing and Health Sciences must hold in confidence all patient related information. Failure to protect any patient's right to confidential treatment may result in a failing course grade and dismissal from the College of Nursing and Health Sciences. To meet College and clinical agency requirements all students are required to affirm their understanding of the patient's right to privacy and need for confidentiality by

signing a Confidentiality Statement. A copy of this statement is in Appendix A of this handbook.

HIPAA STATEMENT

The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) requires health care providers to abide by the regulations for privacy and confidentiality of protected health information and covers all individually identifiable health information whether the information is electronic, paper or spoken. All students are provided HIPAA guidelines and instructions for conduct regarding protection of patient/client information in each course and are responsible for implementing HIPAA standards and procedures as specified in each clinical setting in which student are placed. Violation of HIPAA may result in dismissal from the nursing program.

Recommendation for Student/Faculty Clinical Health/Immunization Requirements

The goal of these requirements is to protect students, faculty, patients and staff from diseases and harm. Published standards from the CDS were used to create these recommendations and referenced below.

Evidence	Reference
Measles, Mumps and Rubella*	
Documentation of 1 dose of MMR or Laboratory evidence of immunity or Documented history of disease Born before 1957, laboratory evidence of immunity or should consider 2 doses of MMR at proper intervals for measles and mumps or should receive 1 dose of MMR for rubella	MMWR, June 14, 2013
Varicella*	
Documentation of immunization with 2 doses of vaccine Laboratory evidence of immunity History of varicella disease (date, age, description) Diagnosis of herpes zoster by healthcare provider	MMWR, June 2007
Hepatitis B*	
Documentation of 3 doses of Hepatitis B vaccine with post vaccination laboratory evidence of immunity Laboratory evidence of immunity Declination signed	MMWR, December 20, 2013
Tdap/Td(tetanus,diphtheria,Petussis)*	
Proof of immunization including at least 1 dose of Tdap if received Td >2 years ago, otherwise Td within 10 years.	MMWR, February, 2013
Annual TB Screening*	
Two-step tuberculin skin test (TST) 1-3 weeks apart if 1 st is negative. If previous documented negative TST within last 12 months, single TST. Previous BCG vaccination – TST as above If previous documented positive TEST – n TST. Baseline chest x ray or result documented. Annual symptom screen if previous positive TST	MMWR, December 30, 2005
Influenza Vaccine	
Annual vaccination against influenza is recommended for health care personnel to reduce risk of contracting the flu and to reduce the risk of transmitting it to others	MMWR, August 5, 2010 Recommendations of Advisory Council on Immunization Practices 2010
Health Exam*	
Performed by healthcare provider (physician, NP, PA) upon NS admission and when change in physical health occurs that may affect ability to fulfill educational requirements. Thereafter, a health form is completed by student/faculty including TB screening questions and change in health status.	
*Required CDC Morbidity and Mortality Weekly reports can found at http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr	

GENERAL INFORMATION

APPOINTMENTS WITH FACULTY

Appointments with faculty members should be scheduled in advance. Scheduled office hours for faculty members are posted on their office door and in course syllabi. If these posted hours are not convenient the student may request an appointment with the faculty member by email or phone. Please remember that faculty members are scheduled in clinical agencies one or two days a week so it may take some time to receive a response.

CHANGE OF ADVISOR

Students will be assigned an advisor in the School of Nursing. The student's advising folder will be maintained in the Administrative Suite in the College of Nursing and Health Sciences. If the student perceives a problem with the assigned advisor, the student will communicate this concern to the advisor and attempt to resolve the problem. If resolution of the problem is not achieved to the student's satisfaction, the student may submit a written request to the Assistant Dean for a change of advisor. The student will be notified in writing of the resolution to the request.

Change of advisor may also occur when the thesis or project is approved. Usually the chair of the committee, the major professor, becomes the student's advisor.

COURSE AND FACULTY EVALUATION

Students have the opportunity to evaluate all courses, as well as clinical and classroom instruction, at the end of each semester. Evaluations are part of the overall College evaluation process and faculty will use the student evaluations to plan for appropriate course changes. Faculty will provide instructions to students regarding participation in the evaluation process near the end of the course. All evaluation content will remain anonymous and faculty will be provided with aggregate evaluation data only after submission of all final semester grades for the course being evaluated.

DRUG FREE SCHOOLS AND WORKPLACE

The College of Nursing and Health Sciences adheres to the policies established by Valdosta State University and specified in the Drug Free Workplace (6/91), Drug Free Schools and Communities Act (9/90), and the Drug and Alcohol Prevention Program (9/90).

In accordance with Valdosta State University's Drug Free Workplace Policy, the College of Nursing and Health Sciences has a responsibility to provide a safe and healthy environment for faculty, staff, and students. Faculty, staff, and students are prohibited from the use, distribution, sale, personal possession, manufacture, or purchase of illegal drugs or alcohol while at work, or in class on the University premises, or while at clinical experience sites.

The Valdosta State University College of Nursing and Health Sciences is dedicated to maintaining a drug free work place and learning environment. An impaired faculty member, staff member, or student constitutes a potential threat to faculty, staff, student, and client safety. Faculty, staff, and students who are suspected to be drug dependent or have an addiction problem are encouraged to seek diagnosis, counseling, and treatment from qualified professionals. The VSU Counseling Center will treat requests for evaluation or therapy confidentially and will provide short-term assistance (5 sessions). Long-term counseling or therapy is the individual's responsibility.

An impaired faculty member, staff member, or student's completion of a program for rehabilitation and treatment facilitates the possibility of return to work or to class following release from treatment.

The inappropriate use of drugs or alcohol is not condoned. Any faculty member, staff member, or student reporting to work, class, or clinical experience sites exhibiting signs/symptoms of alcohol or substance abuse will be requested to submit to a blood and/or urine test for chemical analysis to determine the presence of toxic, hazardous, illegal, or foreign substances. Any faculty member, staff member, or student who declines to submit to testing for reasonable cause will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including discharge or expulsion.

Reasonable suspicion of inappropriate use of drugs or alcohol may come from supervisory observation, co-worker or classmate reports, performance decline, attendance or behavioral changes, or involvement in a workplace, classroom, clinical, or vehicular accident. Suspicion must be verified by at least two witnesses.

A faculty member, staff member, or student suspected of inappropriate use of drugs or alcohol will be escorted to the VSU Student Health Center (if on campus) or to the hospital or agency laboratory (if at a clinical site) where testing will be done according to established protocol. Such testing will be done at the expense of the individual.

Faculty members, staff members, and students charged with a drug violation by law enforcement authorities will be suspended from employment, class, and clinical experience sites. If the charges are dropped, or the involved individual is ruled innocent, the individual may return to employment, class, and clinical experience sites as appropriate.

If the involved individual is convicted of a drug violation, the individual is subject to termination or expulsion. If a faculty member or staff member is convicted of violating any criminal drug statutes the faculty or staff member must notify the Personnel Office within five calendar days of conviction. Students convicted of violating any criminal drug statutes must notify the Dean, College of Nursing and Health Sciences within five calendar days.

GRIEVANCES

Conduct Grievance

Disciplinary hearings at Valdosta State University are hearings to arrive at decisions regarding student behavior. These decisions affect the involved students and their relationship with the University. The administration of discipline is an educational process and the procedures will be determined by educators. Such procedures will give cognizance to the test of fairness, justice, truth, and the requirements of due process. The procedures to be followed by all disciplinary committees are specified in the Valdosta State University Student Handbook.

Academic Grievance

Students in the College of Nursing and Health Sciences must adhere to the student regulations as outlined in the Valdosta State University Student Handbook. Individual faculty members retain primary responsibility for assigning grades and evaluations. The faculty member's judgment is final unless compelling evidence is presented. The College of Nursing and Health Sciences encourages students to seek open discussion and resolution to grievance by applying the following procedure:

1. The nursing student with a problem is obligated first to seek a resolution to the problem with the involved faculty member. Records of the grievance and resolution will be prepared by each faculty involved. Official appeal of course grades must be initiated within 30 days of the grade's posting on BANNER. Grade appeal forms are available from the Registrar's Office. (<http://www.valdosta.edu/academics/registrar/forms/>)
2. If a satisfactory resolution cannot be reached between faculty and student, the student should submit a written request for review with supporting evidence to the Assistant Dean of Nursing.
3. If a satisfactory resolution cannot be reached between the student and the Assistant Dean, the student may appeal in writing to the Dean of the College of Nursing and Health Sciences.
4. The student's complaint and the faculty's response will become part of the student's record.

STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN COLLEGE GOVERNANCE

Graduate students are encouraged to participate in the governance of the College. They may participate through the course, faculty, and clinical evaluations done each semester. They may also meet with the Dean during Open Hours that are scheduled once or twice each semester. Additionally, students may participate through the formal committee structure. The committees that have student representation are listed below:

COMMITTEE	OVERVIEW	STUDENT REPRESENTATION
Graduate Nursing Academic	Monitors the development, implementation, coordination, and evaluation of the graduate	Two (2) elected faculty members, one (1) member appointed by the Dean, and one (1) graduate nursing student (non-voting member).
Student Affairs	Facilitate student self-governance, student scholarly activities, and student participation in the activities of the CONHS	Five (5) undergraduate students [from both the Health Science & the undergraduate nursing programs] and two (2) graduate students.
College of Nursing and Health Sciences Honor Council <i>Special eligibility requirements apply</i>	Considers alleged violations of the Honor Code	five (5) undergraduate student members [three (3) seniors and two (2) juniors] with 3.0 GPA and two (2) graduate student members with 3.5 & three (3) elected CONHS faculty members

THE HONOR CODE

HONOR CODE

An honor code was developed by students of the College of Nursing and Health Sciences with the assistance and approval of the faculty. The code was developed to instill a body of trust within the students and faculty of the College of Nursing and Health Sciences. Through abiding by this code, students and faculty contribute to their own personal success, as well as the success of all those who are affiliated with the College of Nursing and Health Sciences (adapted from Georgia Baptist College of Nursing and Health Sciences). The Honor Code is located in Appendix B; all students are expected to sign a copy of this code for their student record and to abide by the code.

The following guidelines are established as definitions of expected or unacceptable behavior for those students enrolled in the VSU College of Nursing and Health Sciences:

EXPECTED BEHAVIOR

Maintaining Ethical Relationships

All students are expected to exhibit appropriate, responsible behavior consistent with nursing profession codes of conduct. Responsibilities include but are not limited to the following:

1. nursing students will provide nursing care in a prompt, safe, compassionate, and professional manner;
2. no student will attempt to perform a procedure/intervention without the approval of the clinical instructor or preceptor;
3. students will avoid willful or intentional physical or emotional harm to clients or any other persons involved in assigned duties; and,
4. students are directed to report any known or suspected deviations from policies and procedures to faculty and other proper authority.

MAINTAINING PROFESSIONAL DEMEANOR

UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOR

Plagiarism

Using the words, ideas, or conclusions of another person without giving proper credit is a form of intellectual dishonesty known as plagiarism. This behavior has been and still is unacceptable and dishonest. Exact quotes must be cited according to the APA Style Manual (6th Ed.) (Refer to the APA Style Manual Index to locate more detailed information.)

Paraphrasing means to restate; therefore, the wording must be completely changed. "Altering a few words or phrases is not sufficient. . .the entire passage must be restated in your own words" (Tomberlin, 1995). Also, if you use five or more words in a row from someone else's work, you must use that material as a direct quote.

Cheating

Using unauthorized information, as defined by faculty in the course, obtained from students or other sources that may be used to gain academic advantage through false representation or pretense. If the student is in doubt about what constitutes unauthorized information, the student must seek clarification about the matter with the faculty member responsible for the course.

Falsification of Data

Gross negligence or dishonesty in collecting, analyzing, or reporting data in any setting where information is considered pertinent in the accomplishment of the nursing student responsibilities.

Aiding and Abetting Dishonesty

Providing unauthorized information or assistance to another person that may consequently result in grade enhancement or other advancements.

Breaching Confidentiality

Sharing private information and includes, but is not limited to, sharing personal access codes to WebCT.

PROCEDURES FOR HANDLING INFRACTIONS OF COLLEGE OF NURSING AND HEALTH SCIENCES HONOR CODE

Reporting

1. As a student, you have a responsibility to yourself and your fellow students to help uphold the Honor Code at Valdosta State University. If you witness behavior which you suspect might be an Honor Code violation, you must address the problem in any one of three ways. You must:
 - a. personally warn the student; OR
 - b. inform the course instructor of your suspicions and identify the parties involved if possible; and
 - c. if a suspected occurrence is outside of a particular course assignment, you must seek help from a supervising faculty member.
2. Reporting by faculty/staff/clinical instructor/preceptor of suspected infraction should be reported to the faculty member in charge of the course. It may be necessary for the faculty member to report the infraction to the Dean of the College of Nursing and Health Sciences.

Preliminary Inquiry

The person to whom the report is made will initiate a preliminary inquiry into the suspected infraction. The preliminary inquiry is initiated between involved student(s) and faculty member(s). This inquiry will include discussion with all persons involved.

If, based upon the preliminary inquiry, it is determined that an honor code infraction may have occurred, and the matter is not resolved within the student-teacher relationship, then the matter is referred for peer review.

Peer Review

The College of Nursing and Health Sciences Honor Council (CONHSHC) will notify the student five working days prior to the hearing by a hand delivered letter or a certified letter with return receipt. The letter will notify the students of their opportunity to appear at a hearing pursuant to the procedure outlined below. The notice shall include the date, time, location, nature of the charge, hearing procedures (including right of appeal and right to bring witnesses and an advisor), and possible sanctions (also see VSU Student Handbook, Student Code of Ethics, Appendix B, Section 1, Rights of Students).

Hearing

The hearing shall be conducted by a five party panel comprised of CONHSHC members (of these five, there will be at least three student representatives and one faculty representative). Also see VSU Student Handbook, Student Code of Ethics, Appendix B, Sections I - V.

1. Students shall have an opportunity to appear before the hearing panel and present their case. The involved student(s) may review all documents considered by the panel and may question any witnesses who appear before the panel. The student(s) may present their own information and witnesses; however, the panel may limit testimony based on redundancy or lack of relevance.
2. Advisors to the student may not participate directly in the proceedings.
3. The involved faculty/staff/clinical instructor/preceptor may provide relevant information and make recommendations regarding sanctions.
4. The panel will deliberate in private.
5. If the student fails or declines to appear before the panel, the panel will proceed to hear the case and make findings and recommendations without the student's participation.

After reviewing the case, the panel will submit a report and recommendations for sanctions, if any, as well as a notice of the appeals process. The decision on sanctions will be made by a majority vote of the CONHSHC members. The student may submit a statement that will be appended to the report.

Appeal

The student may appeal the CONHSHC decision by using the student formal review process outlined in the student handbook (Appendix B of VSU Student Handbook).

Recording

A report of all findings shall be submitted to the Dean and other involved parties. If there is a finding that a student has committed an Honor Code infraction recommendations for sanction shall be submitted to:

1. The faculty member
2. Dean of the College of Nursing and Health Sciences
3. Dean of the Graduate School (if applicable)
4. Director of Judicial Affairs
5. Academic advisor
6. Sanctioned student

Depending upon the quality of the information and severity of the offense it may be recommended that the student lose privileges (ex. use of the computer lab after hours). The most serious offenses shall be referred to the Director of Judicial Affairs, Valdosta State University.

COMPOSITION OF THE COLLEGE OF NURSING AND HEALTH SCIENCES HONOR COUNCIL (CONHSHC)

The CONHSHC is composed of:

1. Five undergraduate student members (three seniors and two juniors) and two graduate student members, each of whom must maintain a cumulative grade point average of at least 3.0 for undergraduates and 3.5 for graduate students during their tenure on the Council; and,
2. Three faculty members.

SELECTION OF MEMBERS

1. Student members shall be nominated by faculty and elected annually by students enrolled in nursing courses. Elections shall occur during the first three weeks of the fall term (except the first student members must be elected as soon as possible after adoption of the Honor Code).
2. Student members shall elect from their number a student chairperson and student vice-chairperson of senior class or graduate standing.
3. Should a vacancy occur in the student membership, student members shall select a student to fill the vacancy.
4. A CONHSHC co-chairperson shall be appointed from the faculty by the Dean of the College of Nursing and Health Sciences for a three-year term.

5. Two other CONHSHC members shall be elected by the faculty of the College of Nursing and Health Sciences to one-year terms.
6. Faculty members of the School of Nursing shall elect from their number a Recording Secretary.
7. If faculty members cannot serve out their terms, they shall be replaced as they were elected/appointed.

HEARING COMMITTEE

Function

The CONHSHC sits as a hearing panel that acts as an impartial review body between a student accused of violating the Honor Code and his or her accuser(s). The hearing panel shall weigh the information presented during the hearing and reach a decision as to whether or not the accused student has violated the Honor Code.

Disqualification

A member of the CONHSHC shall disqualify self if said person believes that they cannot act on the weight of the information without bias or prejudice. If a student member of the CONHSHC disqualifies self-prior to the hearing, the student chairperson may appoint a replacement selected from the class of the disqualified CONHSHC member. If a faculty member of the CONHSHC disqualifies self-prior to the hearing, the faculty chairperson may appoint a replacement faculty member. The CONHSHC may by two-thirds vote, disqualify one of its members from sitting on a hearing panel, if the best interest of the student, College of Nursing and Health Sciences, or University would be served by removal of said person.

Quorum

A quorum for a hearing panel is three members (at least two students and one faculty) of the CNHC.

(Excerpts were taken from the University of Michigan School of Nursing Student Code of Academic Conduct and the Constitution of the Baylor University Honor System.)

APPENDIX A



Valdosta State University School of Nursing

CONFIDENTIALITY STATEMENT

In accordance with the Law (Official Code of Georgia, Annotated, Sections 37-3,37-4,377) every patient's right to confidential treatment must be protected.

As a student and/or provider of care, I understand that the patient's right to privacy must be protected and treatment must remain confidential. While providing care, I may become knowledgeable of certain patient related information. This information may include patient identity, information related to a patient's treatment, diagnosis, or to other services received.

I understand that at all times I am restricted from discussing or transmitting any information pertaining to a patient with anyone other than VSU College of Nursing and Health Sciences faculty, clinical instructors, or hospital personnel directly responsible for the patient's care. I understand this includes other students outside of post conference.

Personally identifying information is any information which is readily used to identify a particular patient including but not limited to: name, address, room number, diagnosis, Social Security number, physical description, names of family members, and photographs. I further understand that if I do discuss patient information I subject myself to civil liability and may be subject to a failing course grade and dismissal from Valdosta State College of Nursing and Health Sciences.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Printed Name: _____

APPENDIX B



Valdosta State University School of Nursing

THE HONOR CODE

Adapted from Georgia Baptist College of Nursing

As a member of the Valdosta State University (VSU) School of Nursing community, I am bound by honor to uphold standards of honesty and integrity; to pursue intellectual, ethical, spiritual, and moral development; and to accept my personal, academic, and professional responsibilities in the community. To attain these ideals, I embrace this Honor Code as my way of life.

By my signature I acknowledge my responsibility and accountability to uphold this code of honor.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Printed Name: _____