



VALDOSTA
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UNIVERSITY

Building for Our Next Century
1906-2006

Graduate Student Handbook
School of Nursing
Valdosta State University

2020

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.

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THE COLLEGE

INTRODUCTION

One of the goals of Valdosta State University's College of Nursing and Health Sciences is to promote community engagement to help build South Georgia's future. Activities directed toward accomplishing this goal involve mutually beneficial collaboration with our partners in health care. Through these projects, faculty members and students engage in teaching to enable learning beyond the campus walls while providing direct benefit and service to the community.

Our simulation labs provide state-of-the-art learning opportunities for students. Preprogrammed scenarios allow students to practice providing realistic care without risk or harm to the patient. Scenarios also allow all students the opportunity to care for patients with high-acuity, low-frequency conditions, that they might not have the opportunity to care for in the acute care settings. Scenarios enhance critical thinking skills and clinical judgment and during scenarios faculty act as facilitators to guide the learning experience and ensure that students achieve learning objectives.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

VSU College of Nursing and Health Sciences wishes to insure that access to its facilities, programs and services is available to all students, including students with disabilities (as defined by Sections 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, and the ADA Amendments Act of 2008) and all students can study and practice nursing with or without reasonable accommodation. VSU's School of Nursing provides reasonable accommodations to all students on a nondiscriminatory basis consistent with legal requirements as outlined in the above cited acts. To be eligible for accommodations, a student must have a documented disability of (a) a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities of such individual; (b) a record of such impairment; or, (c) be regarded as having such a condition.

We hope you have a wonderful practicum experience!

MESSAGE FROM THE SON ASSOCIATE DEAN

Welcome to the College of Nursing and Health Sciences at Valdosta State University!

Whether you are a prospective student, a current student, or an alumnus, please take time to browse the website to learn about our remarkable programs and the achievements of students, faculty members and alumni. The overriding strength of our educational programs, research opportunities, and clinical services lies in the talented and committed faculty members and clinicians at the College of Nursing and Health Sciences.

The goal of the College is to heighten the level of preparation of our graduates making them more employable and marketable in the workforce and enhancing their ability to assimilate into their professional roles. This is accomplished through the creation of a positive, rich student-centered learning environment that is well grounded in didactic knowledge coupled with a strong clinical emphasis. All of the programs in the College share a common theme in giving back to the communities we serve. Our education focus, therefore, ensures that our students will receive the most up to date, contemporary program that is supported through clinical partners in our community as well as surrounding counties. The College is supported by the brand new Health Sciences Business Administration (HSBA) building that contains instructional classrooms, simulation and lab spaces, and collaborative learning spaces that are second to none. The simulation and lab spaces are outfitted with screening, diagnostic, and treatment equipment that help prepare students for clinical practice. The actualization of the Martin and Laura Lynn Miller Clinic will offer an onsite practice setting for our undergraduate and graduate students in the near future.

It is truly an exciting time to be a Blazer at Valdosta State University!



Mark Reinhardt DNP, NP-BC, CNS, CEN
SON Associate Dean/Professor

VSU SON MISSION AND VISION

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.

EXPANDED STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The College of Nursing and Health Sciences embraces the core characteristics of Valdosta State University as a comprehensive university. The School of Nursing strives to meet the needs of a diverse student population within the framework of the needs of nursing and health care in the region. The School of Nursing pursues excellence in the teaching/learning process and values interdisciplinary collaboration.

The administration, faculty, and staff of the School of Nursing are committed to the creation and development of a student centered, professional, supportive environment in which:

- Graduate students, prepared for advanced professional nursing practice, demonstrate critical thinking in the provision of ethical and holistic specialized health care to individuals, families, and communities;
- Professional development, continuing education programming and community service activities are provided to meet the needs of the region; and
- Faculty advances the educational program and the profession of nursing through excellence in teaching, research, scholarship, and creative work.

VISION STATEMENT

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.

CORE VALUES AND PHILOSOPHY

CORE VALUES

The College of Nursing and Health Sciences develops regional leaders for health care excellence. Our core values integrate the Blazer Creed with Excellence & Success.

Civility – a Blazer shows courtesy and compassion, as well as respect, for the dignity of every human being.

Integrity – each Blazer is responsible for his or her own actions, and our community is stronger when we contemplate the context of our decisions and uphold the principles of trust and honesty.

Citizenship – each Blazer has an interest in the community and, therefore, a duty to stay informed to make positive contributions and to support those who need help.

Excellence – each CONHS Blazer is dedicated to creating a culture where transformation is embraced and reflected in evidence-based teaching and learning and is achieved by both faculty and students. All stakeholders value and benefit from exemplary scholarship, service, teaching, and practice.

Success – each CONHS Blazer pursues growth through life-long learning, goal attainment, and collaborative partnerships among all stakeholders who serve to optimize the health of the region.

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.

VSU PROGRAM INFORMATION & OVERVIEW

THE VSYOU DIFFERENCE

Our master's program allows students to choose from three advanced practice nursing tracks: Adult-Gerontology Primary Care Nurse Practitioner; Family Primary Care Nurse Practitioner; and Psych-Mental Health Nurse practitioner. The program is a hybrid model which consists of 5 weekend class meetings during the semester. Our programs are approved by the Georgia Board of Nursing and accredited by the CCNE, Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education.

WHAT STUDENTS WILL LEARN

Students take a common core that includes Advanced Pathophysiology, Advanced Health Assessment, Advanced Pharmacology and Evidence-Based Practice and Research. Students also participate in objective structured clinical examination (OSCES) experiences, synthesizing and applying the clinical and academic dynamics of advanced nursing practice education.

CAREERS

- **Adult Gerontology Primary Care Nurse Practitioner**
- **Family Primary Care Nurse Practitioner**
- **Family Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner**

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The MSN curriculum is designed to prepare professional registered nurses for advanced practice (APN) roles as they are defined by the AACN Master's Essentials. All MSN students, regardless of their declared specialty track, are required to take the advanced pathophysiology, advanced health assessment, and advanced pharmacology courses to be consistent with the AACN guidelines.

MASTERS 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. Evidence of valid (current unencumbered) licensure as a registered nurse
4. 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.
5. VSU Medical Form

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

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: <https://www.valdosta.edu/programs/m-s-degree-with-a-major-in-nursing/>) 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 five years from admission to the graduate program to complete the requirements for the degree. If the degree is not completed within the five-year limit, coursework more than five years old may need to be repeated.

POST-MASTER'S CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS

In addition to the admission criteria listed above, applicants who have a Master's Degree in Nursing and graduated with at least a 3.0 GPA may be admitted to the department's Nurse Practitioner (FNP, AGNP, or FPMHNP) Post-Master's Certificate Program. Because these certification programs utilize past learning experience to satisfy some course requirements, programs of study are highly individualized and tailored to the needs of the students. Therefore, the applicant must meet with the School of Nursing's Graduate Nursing Program Director's to complete a gap analysis and design a program of study for post-master's requirements. Out-of-state applicants should become familiar with their state's regulations governing distance accessible programs.

TRANSFER CREDIT

Courses considered for transfer credit must: (1) be no more than 7 years of age at the time of admission, unless otherwise approved by the program; (2) be earned at an institution that is regionally accredited; (3) be graduate-level courses; and (4) not exceed specific program limitations on total number of hours. All transfer requests are subject to approval by the Associate Provost for Graduate Studies and Research.

The Graduate Catalog can be found at <http://catalog.valdosta.edu/graduate/>.

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

GAP ANALYSIS FOR POST-GRADUATE NP STUDENT

Name of Candidate: _____

New National NP Certification Sought: _____

NP National Certification Previously Completed: _____ School: _____ Yr: _____

Instructions:

A gap analysis form is completed for students who are nationally certified NP's seeking partial credit or waiver of coursework towards completion of a post-master's certificate in another NP practice area. The form provides an analysis of completed coursework and clinical experiences compared with the program requirements and national NP competencies necessary for certification in the second NP population-focused area of practice.

- Column 1 lists the courses for the standard required program of study for preparation in the DESIRED NP area of practice.
- Column 2, list courses from the student’s transcript that will be used to waive courses from column 1.
- Column 3 identifies and describes clinical hours and experiences needed to meet the required competencies for the new or desired area of NP practice. Students must meet the clinical course requirements of the program of study using both clinical courses previously taken and indicated on the transcript and courses to be completed.
- Column 4 lists all coursework to be completed for the certificate (all courses from column 1 not waived). This column, in combination with column 3, will constitute the student’s individualized program of study.

GAP ANALYSIS FOR POST-GRADUATE NP STUDENT

List Required Courses for the DESIRED NP area of practice	List Courses from Transcript that Satisfy Required Courses listed in Column 1	Type and Number of Clinical Experiences Needed by Student	Coursework to be Completed by the Student for the Certificate

Signature of Program Director:

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 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 X-ray 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 student 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. Students who are unsuccessful on the second attempt of the comprehensive exam will receive an incomplete (I) in NURS 7590 and will need to re-take NURS 7590 and remediation as identified by the course instructor and the graduate nursing director. Remediation can include a plan of study, documentation of student success center mentoring, and documentation of completion of a NP certification review course. In the event of a failure on the 4th attempt of the exit exam, students will receive an F in NURS 7590 and be required to take remediation course(s) as well as re-take the Capstone course at their own expense. The remediation plan of study, will be based upon knowledge deficits

identified by a group of NP faculty's analysis of the students exit exams results. Graduation dates will be delayed based upon the scheduling of the required remediation course(s) and the re-taking of NURS 7590. Students who do not to pass the exit exam on the 5th attempt, will receive an F in the course and be dismissed from the program.

READMISSION

Students dismissed from the Graduate Nursing Program due to academic and/or clinical performance, progression, and/or unprofessional behaviors meet the criteria for sanctions and/or dismissal. If the student is dismissed from the nursing program, the student may appeal to the Graduate Faculty Committee per policy. If the dismissal is upheld, the student's right to continue enrollment in the nursing program will be permanently terminated. Dismissed students will not be considered for re-admission. Dismissal from nursing major does not affect the ability of the student to progress in the University in another major.

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 practice is the responsibility of the student. Travel to some clinical agencies may require several 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 (Castle Branch)
- Electronic Portfolio
- Typhon
- 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 Application Fee - approximately \$40

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 : <https://www.valdosta.edu/academics/elearning/blazeview.php> and the Information Technology website on policies at <https://www.valdosta.edu/administration/it/helpdesk/>.

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 Graduate students, is:

A	=	90–100
B	=	80–89
C	=	70–79
D	=	60–69
F	=	59 & below

No rounding per CONHS policy; NO EXCEPTIONS

Graduate students are expected to earn course grades of at least “B” in all graduate courses per the School of Nursing and Graduate School policies.

Again, 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 activity 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.

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.

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.

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.

UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOR

MAINTAINING PROFESSIONAL Demeanor

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.

CONHS DISPOSITION POLICY

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Disposition Policy process is for faculty to identify students who may need intervention to successfully complete both the pre-professional and professional requirements for their program of study. Dispositions are the values, qualities, and professional ethics that influence one's behaviors toward students, families, colleagues and communities. Dispositions can affect student learning, motivation and development of personal and professional growth.

DISPOSITIONAL EXPECTATIONS

1. Demonstrates ethical behavior as defined by the profession: American Nurses Association Code of Ethics: <https://www.nursingworld.org/coe-view-only>
2. Demonstrates professional behaviors as defined by Graduate Nursing Handbook.
3. Adheres to university, class, and clinical policies. Classroom examples include punctuality; adhering to schedules; and observing the classroom structure as outlined in the course syllabi. Clinical examples include adhering to policies of students' program of study; adhering to workplace policies of various clinical sites; punctuality; and meeting the expectations of clinical sites.
4. Exhibits appropriate and professional interactions with faculty, staff, preceptors, and peers. Examples include demonstrating the ability to work with diverse individuals; demonstrating courtesy and respect for all; commitment to diversity; open-mindedness and support of others; and willingness to accept constructive criticism from preceptors and faculty of the student's program of study.
5. Maintains professional appearance, communication and mannerisms. Examples include dressing appropriately for the situation and learning environment; exhibiting competence and professionalism in oral, written, social media, and electronic communications; exhibiting fair and equitable treatment of all; maintaining confidentiality of client records, correspondences, and conversations; demonstrating truthfulness as well as honesty; and working collaboratively with peers, faculty and staff.
6. Exhibits appropriate level of preparedness in classroom and clinical settings. Examples include communicating with professors and instructors regarding absences; being prepared to contribute to class discussions on the selected topic; being respectful and attentive in class and at clinical sites; fulfilling course and clinical obligations; completing assignments in a timely manner; exhibiting critical thinking skills; providing ongoing and competent client/patient care; willingness to approach tasks in an organized and skillful manner; and demonstrating self-reflection and the ability to make improvements based on preceptor and faculty feedback.
7. Demonstrates a collaborative approach with peers, students, faculty, parents, clinical preceptors and administration when seeking solutions to problems. Students demonstrate problem-solving skills in the classroom, among peers, and at clinical sites. Examples include: asking questions when a student is unsure about content material or ongoing client/patient care; sharing thoughts and ideas in order to better problem solve; and interacting positively with others in order to create a team-driven, client/patient-centered approach to problem solving.
8. Displays qualities of lifelong learning through engagement in completion of course requirements, continuous professional development, and academic preparedness. Lifelong learning is a term that applies to continuing one's education through university, community-based, or profession-based programs.

Examples of Actions Necessitating Completion of Disposition Forms, (including, but not limited to)

- Excessive absences or lateness for class or clinical assignments (see University policy and course syllabus).
- Lack of professional dress or demeanor when interacting with other students, clients/patient, preceptors or faculty as defined by student's major department.
- Disruptive behavior toward faculty, staff, preceptors, peer student or guest speakers. This includes classroom disruptive behavior. This extends to clients/patients and preceptors when students are in a clinical area affiliated with their program of study.
- Inability to contribute effectively in a group setting.
- Lack of proficiency and/or professionalism in written and/or oral language skills, electronic forms of communications (i.e., e-mail, text, social media, etc.).
- Lack of professionalism, responsibility, respect for others, confidentiality and accountability on social media.
- Lack of content/ clinical knowledge, including appropriate skill progression, in any content area at the student's current level. Appropriate content knowledge and skill progression is important when working with clients/patients
- Removal from a clinical experience.
- Plagiarism or cheating on any graded activity (see University Academic Integrity policy as outlined in the VSU Student Handbook: <http://www.valdosta.edu/administration/student-affairs/student-conduct-office/student-resources.php>).
- Dishonesty.
- Breach of confidentiality (in accordance with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act).
- Compromising the well-being of a client, patient, or colleague.
- Harassment of clients, preceptors, peer students, faculty, or staff (see University Sexual Harassment, Violence, & Assault policy as outlined in the VSU Student Handbook: <http://www.valdosta.edu/administration/student-affairs/student-conduct-office/student-resources.php>).
- Any other disposition issues outlined by the student's major/field of study

Procedures for Assessing Dispositions

A student's professional dispositions will be assessed in classes, clinical, and community settings. The instructor or preceptor who identifies a deficiency or behavior inconsistent with established dispositions will follow these procedures:

1. Upon a student's action which necessitates the completion of a disposition report, the instructor or preceptor will schedule an informal meeting. The purpose of the meeting with the student is to discuss the area of concern and offer possible solutions and remedies.
 - a. The date of the meeting, the instructor's specific concerns and potential solutions will be documented on the Disposition Report Form and placed in the student's file.
 - b. Both instructor and student will receive a copy of the completed form.
 - c. The faculty member must complete either a VSU Student Conduct Incident Report or a VSU Academic Integrity Report if applicable. This can be found at <http://www.valdosta.edu/administration/student-affairs/student-conduct-office/>.

2. If a second meeting becomes necessary, based on the same deficiency or additional behaviors of concern, through completion of a second disposition form, the following steps will be implemented.
 - a. The instructor will schedule a meeting to include the student and an ad hoc committee consisting of the student's advisor, the department chair/assistant dean, program coordinator, and the instructor. Students have the option to request an additional committee member outside of the student's program of study, if desired.
 - i. In the event that the program director/coordinator is the person bringing the second disposition issue forward, another committee member must be secured.
 - ii. In the event that the program director/coordinator and the advisor are the same person, another committee member must be secured.
 - b. The faculty member scheduling the formal meeting must complete either a VSU Student Conduct Incident Report or a VSU Academic Integrity Report if applicable. This can be found at <http://www.valdosta.edu/administration/student-affairs/student-conduct-office/>.
 - c. This meeting must occur within 5 university business days of the reported deficiency or behavior. At this time, the instructor who completed the second disposition report will review the prior behavioral concerns recorded in the student's file, as well as the continued or additional concerns that initiated the second report. The student will have the opportunity to explain her/his position and provide additional relevant information. The department chair or program coordinator will determine whether additional faculty, staff or school personnel are required to support or refute the observed behavior and will meet with those persons to gather the information.
 - d. The result of this meeting may be a recommendation that the student be allowed to continue her/his program, development of a remediation plan, or a determination to remove the student from the program. The department chair or program coordinator will make the final recommendation with input from the committee and ensure the decision is delivered to the student within 5 university business days of the meeting occurring. Documentation of the meeting's content, including any written agreements or action plans, will be placed in the student's file. Each attendee will receive a copy.
 - e. The student has a right to appeal the committee's decision within 5 university business days of the student being notified of the decision. He or she must submit the appeal in writing to the Dean of the College of Nursing and Health Sciences. The Dean will review the request and all related documents in the student's file, will meet with the student, instructor and department chair as needed to review the appeal, and will render a decision in writing.
 - f. If a satisfactory resolution is not reached, graduate students may appeal to the Dean of the Graduate School and undergraduates may appeal to the Vice President of Academic Affairs
3. Upon receiving three disposition forms, or any single incident considered a significant violation of ethical or professional behavior, the student may be removed from his or her Program of Study. Ethical and professional behaviors are referenced above, and are defined by each profession in the College of Nursing and Health Sciences
 - a. The faculty member completing the third disposition form must complete either a VSU Student Conduct Incident Report or a VSU Academic Integrity Report if applicable. This can be found at http://www.valdosta.edu/administration/student-affairs/student-conduct-office

College of Nursing and Health Sciences Disposition Report

Date: _____
Student Name: _____ ID No. _____
Major: _____ Advisor: _____
Name of Instructor/ Preceptor Initiating Disposition Form: _____

Complete the following:

1. Give evidence for area(s) of concern. Attach copies of documentation.
2. Student response to the completion of the disposition form (student writes response below):
3. Meeting details (department head, faculty member, and student).
4. Action plan (if applicable):

5. The department head, faculty member, and student must sign the appropriate statement below.

Department Head: Statement: I have met with the student and faculty member to discuss this concern and an action plan has been outlined and discussed with the faculty member and the student.

Department Head Signature _____ Date Met _____

Faculty Statement: I have met with the student and discussed the concern(s).

VSU Faculty Signature _____ Date Met _____

Student statement: I understand that failure to comply with the outlined action plan may result in my not completing my program of study.

Student: Signature _____ Date: _____

6. Distribute copies of this form to the Student Advising Folder; Department Head, and Faculty Member.

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: _____