



Vocational Nurse Program

STUDENT HANDBOOK

2017-2018

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Dear Nursing Student,

The faculty would like to extend to you a warm welcome to our campus. We are pleased to offer you a quality education in which you will be given the opportunity to receive a certificate in Vocational Nursing.

Students entering our program come from a variety of backgrounds. This diversity contributes directly to the quality of your educational experience. You will also be working closely with dedicated faculty who have considerable expertise in the areas in which they teach.

We are confident that when you complete the program you will leave with memories of a rich and satisfying educational experience. We are pleased that you have selected our nursing program and hope you will see the faculty as your ongoing mentors who will be assisting and guiding you toward your goal of becoming a registered nurse.

All our best wishes for your success,

The Vocational Nurse Faculty and Staff
College of the Mainland



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1.0 VN Program Overview

1.1 Introduction

This handbook has been prepared to introduce nursing students to the COM VN Program. The policies and regulations of the college catalog, COM student handbook and the VN student handbook provide guidance for the nursing student. Failure to comply will result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal from the nursing program and/or college.

Requirements of the Nursing Program are subject to changes in legislation and BON rules and regulations. The current Nursing Student Handbook policies and procedures supersede previous editions once approved by the nursing faculty regardless of the catalog requirements under which the student was first admitted.

1.2 Program History

The COM VN Program faculty accepted the first class of students in 2005 under the direction of Dr. Gaye Reeves. The VN program has also been directed by Dr. Jere Hammer. Mary Amanda Ordonez is the current Interim Director of Nursing for the VN Program.

The VN Program has maintained approval from the Texas Board of Nursing throughout the years.

1.3 Program Mission

The VN Program mission is to provide opportunities for the development of entry level nursing knowledge, skills, and attitudes in four major nursing roles:

- Member of the Profession
- Provider of Patient-Centered Care
- Patient Safety Advocate
- Member of the Health Care Team

1.4 Program Description

The twelve month VN curriculum includes a combination of classroom learning, nursing skills training, and clinical experience in a variety of clinical settings. Learning opportunities are based on contact hours as prescribed by the Texas State Board of Nursing.

Graduates of the VN program are encouraged to consider continuing their education through the **LVN-RN transition track**, which is a four semester plan of study designed for Licensed Vocational Nurses (LVNs).

The VN track requires Anatomy and Physiology (AP) (BIOL 2404) as a pre-requisite. Future VN students who are considering the LVN-ADN transition may consider taking the ADN general education requirement AP courses which consist of AP I (BIOL 2401) and AP II (BIOL 2402).



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The Vocational Nursing program is approved by the Texas Board of Nursing (BON). Upon successful completion of the VN curriculum, graduates may apply to the Texas Board of Nursing to take the National Council of Licensure Examination (NCLEX-PN). The BON may be contacted at the following:

Texas Board of Nursing
 333 Guadalupe #3-460, Austin, TX 78701
 1-512-305-7400; www.bon.state.tx.us

Admission to the college does not guarantee admission to the VN program. Students may apply for admission to the VN program once all course prerequisites and admission criteria are met.

1.5 Program of Study

Vocational Nurse Curriculum			
Semester	Course	Course Title	Credit Hours
Pre-Req	BIOL 2404	Introduction to A & P	4
Spring	VNSG 1122	Vocational Nursing Concepts	1
	VNSG 1323	Basic Nursing Skills	3
	VNSG 1227	Ess of Medication Administration	2
	VNSG 1226	Gerontology	2
	VNSG 2331	Advanced Nursing Skills	3
	VNSG 1260	Clinical - Practical Nurse	2
Summer	VNSG 1331	Pharmacology	3
	VNSG 1429	Medical Surgical Nursing I	4
	VNSG 1236	Mental Health Nursing	2
	VNSG 1261	Clinical - Practical Nursing II	2
Fall	VNSG 1330	Maternal/Neonatal Nursing	3
	VNSG 1334	Pediatrics	3
	VNSG 1432	Medical surgical Nursing II	4
	VNSG 1219	Professional Development	2
	VNSG 2460	Clinical - Practical Nursing III	4
Total			44

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1.6 Student Learning Outcomes

The graduate will meet learning outcomes that support the Differentiated Essential Competencies (DECs) of graduates of Texas nursing programs. The vocational nurse role represents the beginning of the nursing practice continuum as Provider of Member of a Profession, Provider of Patient-Centered Care, Patient Safety Advocate, and Member of the Health Care Team. Upon successful completion of the VN curriculum, the graduate will be expected to meet the following student learning outcomes:

Provider of Member of a Profession:

1. Demonstrate accountability for own nursing practice.
2. Comply with the scope of practice outlined in TBON rules regulating the Nurse Practice Act.
3. Demonstrate understanding of Peer Review committee and the Safe Harbor process.
4. Participate as an advocate in activities that focus on improving the health care needs of patients.
5. Demonstrate positive role model behaviors that promote the development and practice of vocational nursing.
6. Demonstrate understanding the role of a vocational nurse in quality improvement activities.

Provider of Patient-Centered Care:

1. Assist in determining the health status and holistic needs of patients based on interpretation of evidenced-based health related data; and preventative health practices in collaboration with patients, their families, and other members of the immediate interdisciplinary health care team.
2. Document assessed needs of the patient to include basic physical, emotional, spiritual, social, and cultural health care and communicate findings to appropriate interdisciplinary health care professionals.
3. Apply the Nursing Process when assisting with the formulation of goals/outcomes and a plan of patient-centered care in collaboration with the patient, their families, and interdisciplinary health care team members to maintain health across the lifespan, to include end of life care.
4. Implement plan of care according to standards of practice within legal and ethical parameters, including scope of vocational nursing education, and in collaboration with the patient and interdisciplinary health care team to assist the patient in meeting changing health care needs across the lifespan.

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5. Implement teaching-learning plans for patients and their families with common health problems and well-defined learning needs.
6. Seek guidance in the evaluation of the patient's responses and expected outcomes to therapeutic nursing interventions and collaborate with other health care team members in revising patient-centered care plans.
7. Provide direct basic and compassionate care to assigned multiple patients in structured settings.
8. Use critical thinking skills to apply the problem-solving approach as the basis for decision making to assure evidenced-based safe practice.

Patient Safety Advocate:

1. Demonstrate knowledge of the Texas Nursing Practice Act and the TBON rules that emphasize safety, as well as federal, state and local government safety requirements and standards.
2. Demonstrate understanding of mandatory reporting requirements of the Texas Nursing Practice Act.
3. Demonstrate knowledge of principles of quality improvement in the safety of providing patient-centered care.
4. Safely perform preventive & therapeutic procedures and nursing measures.
5. Demonstrate knowledge to accept & make assignments that take into consideration patient safety & organizational policies.

Member of the Health Care Team:

1. Assist in the coordination of human and material resources for the provision of safe patient-centered care for assigned patients & their families' information.
2. Collaborate with patients, their families, and the interdisciplinary health care team to provide direct patient-centered care to assigned patients.
3. Participate in the identification of patient needs for appropriate referrals to resources that facilitate continuity of safe care.
4. Participate in activities, which support the organizational framework of structured health care settings.



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5. Demonstrate understanding of management skills in assigning and supervising nursing care

1.6 Student Concerns

For any student concerns, the student should first speak directly to the instructor regarding the concern. If the concern is not resolved at the instructor level, the student will make an appointment to discuss the concern with the course facilitator. The student will only make an appointment with the Program Coordinator or Director of Nursing if the issue has not been resolved after speaking with the course facilitator.

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2.0 Student Policies

2.1 Admission, Progression, Dismissal, & Readmission Criteria

Admission, progression, dismissal, and readmission criteria for the nursing program differ from those of the college. The Nursing Program faculty has the authority to establish and implement the following policies and reserve the right to make changes to the student handbook as deemed necessary.

2.1.1 Admission Criteria

Admission criteria established by the faculty and staff include:

1. Admission to the college.
2. Meet all TSI requirements for the college
3. Transcripts evaluated by nursing department and admissions department (nursing courses will only transfer to COM if 3 years old or less)
4. Establishing a nursing academic plan with Academic Advisor.
5. Complete online pre-nursing orientation session at <http://www.com.edu/degrees-programs/more-about-nursing.php>
6. Earn a prerequisite GPA of 2.0
7. Submitting of required clinical readiness documentation.
8. Clearing BON and clinical agency criminal background checks.
9. Clearing drug screen.

Acknowledgment of reading the VN Student Handbook indicates that the student has read and understands the policy criminal background screening for the nursing program. Acknowledgment of reading the VN Student Handbook also provides the student's consent for the results of the criminal background checks to be released to the COM Director of Nursing.

For detailed information about the Vocational Nursing program admission criteria go to <http://www.com.edu/nursing>.

Eligibility for Licensure by Examination

Information regarding conditions that may **disqualify** graduates from licensure and their rights to petition the Board for a Declaratory Order of Eligibility can be found in the Nursing Practice Act and the BON Rules and Regulations links below:

Texas Nursing Practice Act Excerpts

[Sec. 301.252. License Application](#)

[Sec. 301.257. Declaratory Order of License Eligibility](#)

[Sec. 301.452. Grounds for Disciplinary Action](#)

[Sec. 301.4521. Physical and Psychological Evaluation](#)

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[Sec. 301.453. Disciplinary Authority of Board; Methods of Discipline](#)
[Sec. 301.4531. Schedule of Sanctions](#)
[Sec. 301.4535. Required Suspension, Revocation, or Refusal of License for Certain Offenses](#)
[Sec. 301.454. Notice and Hearing](#)
[Sec. 301.455. Temporary License Suspension or Restriction](#)
[Sec. 301.456. Evidence](#)
[Sec. 301.457. Complaint and Investigation](#)
[Sec. 301.458. Initiation of Formal Charges; Discovery](#)
[Sec. 301.459. Formal Hearing](#)
[Sec. 301.460. Access to Information](#)
[Sec. 301.461. Assessment of Costs](#)
[Sec. 301.462. Voluntary Surrender of License](#)
[Sec. 301.463. Agreed Disposition](#)
[Sec. 301.464. Informal Proceedings](#)
[Sec. 301.465. Subpoenas; Request for Information](#)
[Sec. 301.466. Confidentiality](#)
[Sec. 301.467. Reinstatement](#)
[Sec. 301.468. Probation](#)
[Sec. 301.469. Notice of Final Action](#)

Texas BON Rules & Regulations Excerpts

[213.27. Good Professional Character](#)
[213.28. Licensure of Persons with Criminal Offenses](#)
[213.29. Criteria and Procedure Regarding Intemperate Use and Lack of Fitness in Eligibility and Disciplinary Matters](#)
[213.30. Declaratory Order of Eligibility for Licensure](#)

The complete documents can be found at the Board of Nursing Website:

- Nursing Practice Act
 - http://www.bon.texas.gov/laws_and_rules_nursing_practice_act.asp
- BON Rules & Regulations
 - http://www.bon.texas.gov/laws_and_rules_rules_and_regulations.asp

2.1.2 Progression Criteria

Progression criteria established by the faculty and staff include:

1. Completing each sequential nursing course with a minimum grade of “C”
2. Have no more than two nursing courses with final grades of “D” or “F”
3. Maintaining at least a 2.0 cumulative GPA throughout the Nursing Program
4. Demonstrating Good Professional Character as defined by the BON

2.1.3 Dismissal/Withdrawal Criteria

Dismissal/withdrawal criteria established by the college and nursing faculty include:

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Student-Initiated Withdrawal

A student desiring to withdraw from a course must withdraw officially through the Registrar's Office; simply informing the instructor of a desire or intent to withdraw is not sufficient. The student is responsible for officially withdrawing from a course. A grade of "W" will be recorded on the transcript if the course is dropped on or before the last day to withdraw. A grade of "D" will be recorded after the last day to withdraw or if the student does not officially withdraw from the course. A grade of "W" will be recorded if the student fails to progress within the course. Two withdrawals resulting from failure to progress within the nursing program will be considered a failing grade when re-applying to the VN program.

Faculty-Initiated Dismissal/Withdrawal

Faculty may withdraw a student from a course due to lack of attendance, poor academic performance, or for behavior/conduct detrimental to the learning progress of the student, the class, or detrimental to the safety of patients. A faculty-initiated withdrawal will be considered a withdrawal due to failure to progress in the course.

Exit Interview Process

When a student withdraws or is dismissed from the Nursing Program for any reason (i.e., course failure, illness, etc.) an exit interview is required. All recommendations made by the instructor or the Department Chair will be included on the Exit Interview form. The student will sign the form and receive a copy. An Exit Interview form will be completed by the person conducting the interview. **An exit interview is required for consideration for re-entry into the Nursing Program.**

The **exiting student is responsible** for contacting the course facilitator to schedule the exit interview within 6 weeks following withdrawal from the Nursing Program. If the course facilitator is not on campus to conduct the exit interview, the student will schedule an appointment with the Program Coordinator to complete the interview.

2.1.4 Readmission/Transfer Criteria

Readmission criteria established by the faculty and staff include:

1. No more than one failed nursing course in the specified nursing program
2. Exit interview on file
3. Nursing courses are only valid for readmission if completed within the previous three years.
4. Updated academic plan in Student Planning
5. Cumulative nursing GPA of at least 2.0
6. Successful demonstration of competency in previous nursing coursework
7. Approval of the Admission/Progression Committee

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8. Readmission is contingent upon available resources, and documentation of clinical readiness.
9. Readmission letters are valid for the specified semester.

2.1.5 Readmission/Transfer Criteria

Transfer criteria established by the faculty and staff include:

1. Admission to the college
2. Meet all TSI requirements for the college
3. Take and pass with a minimum grade of “C” all prerequisite courses required for the desired track
4. Submit transcript(s) and a Transcript Evaluation Form to admissions department for **prerequisite and nursing courses** that are being transferred from another institution (nursing courses will only transfer to COM if completed within the previous 3 years).
5. No more than one failed nursing course on the transcript
6. Letter of good standing from the dean/director of the former nursing program
7. Cumulative nursing GPA of at least 2.0
8. Current nursing academic plan in Student Planning
9. Successful demonstration of competency in previous nursing coursework as required by the Admission/Progression Committee
10. Approval of the Admission/Progression Committee
11. Space available in desired course(s)
12. The admission letter for transfer is contingent upon available resources, and documentation of clinical readiness.
13. The admission letter for transfer is valid for the specified semester.

2.2 Attendance

Instructors will keep accurate records of student attendance. Absences and tardiness will be reflected in the final course grade.

Breaks are scheduled approximately every 50 minutes in classes that meet for 1-1/2 hours or more. Students returning to class after the break “end” time will be recorded as tardy.

2.2.1 Class Absences/Lab Absences

There will be no excused absences. One percentage point will be deducted from the final course grade for each absence.

2.2.2 Clinical Absences

There will be no excused absences. One percentage point will be deducted from the final course grade for each hour or portion of an hour missed. In order to meet Clinical/Lab requirements and pass the clinical course, no more than 12 clinical/lab contact hours can be missed.

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2.2.3 Class/Lab Tardiness

Students are considered tardy if arriving after the start time of the class or lab setting. Students are also considered tardy if they arrive after the specified “end” time for a break. Late arrivals must remain in the back of the room until the next break. Two late arrivals to a class or lab course will count as one absence in the course.

2.2.4 Clinical Tardiness

Students are considered tardy if arriving after the start time of the clinical day. Students will be dismissed from clinical for the day and counted absent if arriving to the clinical or lab setting more than 15 minutes past the scheduled start time according to the instructor’s clock. Each late arrival will count as one percentage point off the final grade.

Any class, clinical, or lab hours missed as a result of instructor absence will be made up without penalty to the student.

2.3 Audio/Video Recording

Students are prohibited from video recording classroom lectures and discussion at any time.

Students may audio record classroom lectures and discussions for individual use with written permission from the class instructor and notification of all students and guest speakers in the class that audio recording may occur. An exception to this policy is any student determined by the Services for Students with Disabilities to be entitled to education adjustments involving audio recording.

Permission by the instructor to allow the recording is not a transfer of any copyrights in the recording. The recording may not be reproduced or uploaded to publicly accessible web environments. Public distribution of lecture recordings may constitute copyright infringement in violation of federal or state law.

To request permission to audio record:

1. Submit a typed request for permission to audio record to the faculty prior to the start of the class session.
2. Include these agreements in the request:
 - a. I agree not to make or allow to be made any additional copies of the audio recording.
 - b. I agree not to share the audio recording with any other individual or group.
 - c. I agree to completely erase all audio recordings made during the course at the end of the semester.
 - d. I agree to stop audio recording:
 - i. During any audio or video presentation containing copyrighted material
 - ii. When the faculty requests no recording

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- iii. When students in the class request no recording
- iv. During lectures or discussions directed by anyone other than the regular course faculty

3. Sign and date the request.

2.4 Behavior/Conduct

In addition to following the Code of Student Conduct in the COM Student Handbook, students enrolled in nursing programs must demonstrate [Good Professional Character](#) as defined by the BON and adhere to the ANA [Code of Ethics for Nurses](#).

2.5 Clinical Documentation

Students must provide and maintain current documentation of continuing compliance with clinical requirements defined by assigned affiliating agencies for immunizations, TB skin test, CPR certificate for healthcare providers, and other agency requests in order to participate in clinical learning experiences. Students with expired requirements will be prohibited from participating in clinical learning experiences until the requirement is met. Missed clinical hours can affect successful course completion and progression in the program. (See Attendance policy.)

Clinical requirements include, but are not limited to:

Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) Certification by the American Heart Association (AHA) Basic Life Support for Healthcare Providers or Red Cross Professional Rescuer CPR certification. **No other CPR certification will be accepted.**

Immunizations

Flu vaccination must be renewed each year. Tdap vaccination must be renewed every 10 years.

Tuberculosis Skin Tests

TB skin testing must be renewed each year.

Physical/Mental Readiness for Clinical

If a student appears to be physically or mentally unable to provide safe patient care, the clinical instructor will have the option of releasing the student from clinical duties for the day. If released, this will constitute a clinical absence.

Professional Liability (Malpractice) Insurance

The non-refundable insurance fee is paid with registration once each year.

2.6 Clinical Guidelines

Scheduled clinical hours are dependent upon availability to clinical sites and faculty. The clinical assignments are variable and may include days, nights and/or weekends. The faculty will do all in its power to give students enough prior notice of required schedules to allow them to plan for their outside responsibilities.

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Preparation for Clinical Experience

Patient care assignments are made according to the specific clinical rotation goals and objectives. If applicable, the student is expected to complete all preclinical assignments prior to caring for assigned patient(s). Failure to meet those assignments will result in the student being dismissed from the clinical experience for the day. This will constitute an absence and will be reflected in the weekly evaluation and final course grade.

Rules and Regulations Governing the Clinical Practice Setting

Students are required to conform to the rules and regulations of assigned clinical agencies. Students that violate rules or regulations will be disciplined accordingly and may be removed from the clinical setting.

Clinical Patient Confidentiality Requirements

Students will protect patient confidentiality at all times. No identifiable patient information or copies of any part of the patient record may be removed from the clinical facility. See HIPAA Privacy Rule Compliance; Behavior/Conduct policies.

Illness or Injury of Student while in the Clinical Setting

Illness or injury while in the clinical setting must be reported to the faculty immediately. Expenses for emergency room treatment and physician fees are the responsibility of the student.

Emergency Needlestick Information

If a student sustains a needlestick or sharps injury or is exposed to the blood or body fluid of a patient during the clinical rotation, the student must immediately follow these steps:

1. Wash needlesticks and cuts with soap and water
2. Flush splashes to the nose, mouth, or skin with water
3. Irrigate eyes with clean water, saline, or sterile irrigating solution
4. Report the incident to the clinical faculty
5. Immediately seek medical treatment

<http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/bbp/emergnedl.html>

Preventing Needlesticks or Blood/Body Fluid Exposures

1. Avoid using needles whenever safe and effective alternatives are available.
2. Avoid recapping or bending needles that might be contaminated.
3. Use standard-labeled, leak-proof, puncture-resistant sharps containers provided by the clinical agency.
4. Promptly dispose of used needle devices and sharps in the containers.
5. Plan for the safe handling and disposal of needles before use.

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6. Secure used sharps containers during transport to prevent spilling.
7. Follow standard precautions, infection prevention, and general hygiene practices consistently
8. Participate in the clinical agency's bloodborne pathogens training program.
9. Use devices with safety features provided by the clinical facility.
10. Report any needlestick and other sharps injury immediately.

<http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/2012-123/>

Health Status

Any student sustaining an injury, requiring hospitalization or surgery, or who is pregnant, must obtain a written statement from the physician verifying that his/her health status will permit the required level of performance in the clinical agency. A student may not be allowed to attend clinical if he/she must take medications that might interfere with his/her ability to perform satisfactorily, or if the clinical agency does not permit the student to attend clinical based on his/her health status. A student who is pregnant should inform the clinical faculty so that no assignment will be made involving exposure to radiation or other hazards.

Uniforms

Students will wear the approved school uniform (below) when in the clinical setting, unless otherwise directed. Uniforms must be worn only for clinical activities and experiences. Failure to comply will result in the student being dismissed from the clinical experience for the day. This will constitute an absence and will be reflected the weekly evaluation and final course grade.

1. Top
 - a. White Scrub Top
 - b. COM Nursing seal with program patch sewn on the RIGHT chest, 2-1/2 inches from the shoulder seam.
 - c. Solid white, short or long-sleeved T-Shirt may be worn under white scrub top
2. Bottom
 - a. Teal Cherokee® Workwear Female Pull-On Cargo Pant
 - b. Teal Cherokee® Workwear Unisex Drawstring Cargo Pant
 - c. Teal Cherokee® Workwear Male Drawstring Cargo Pant
3. Lab Coat
 - a. White, cotton or cotton-blend style of choice
 - b. College Nursing seal sewn on the left chest above the pocket, 2 inches down from the shoulder seam
4. Shoes/Socks:
 - a. White socks or hosiery
 - b. White **closed-toe**, leather or leather-like nursing shoes (cloth/canvas athletic shoes are **not** permissible)

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5. COM clinical ID must be worn at all times in the clinical area. COM IDs will be attached above the waist by an unadorned badge holder with a plain badge holder above the waist.
6. When street clothes are required by the clinical agency, business clothing will be worn. Jeans may not be worn in any clinical setting. Students are expected to arrive wearing a lab coat bearing the college seal, and COM student picture I.D.
7. When the agency-provided scrub gowns or suits are required for the clinical assignment, students will arrive at the agency in the complete school uniform and change into the agency scrubs.
8. A Lab coat, with COM clinical ID attached above the waist by an unadorned badge holder, will be worn on specified occasions: Clinical orientation, field trips, and other times as directed by the faculty.

Grooming and Personal Hygiene

1. General cleanliness and good grooming are expected at all times. Heavy makeup is inappropriate in patient-care settings. No scented perfumes, powders, or body lotions/washes may be offensive to persons who are ill and should, therefore, not be worn in the clinical setting.
2. Hair styles should conform to the standards accepted in a professional environment. Hair, including wigs, must be clean and up off the collar of the uniform and/or lab coat, so not to interfere with patient care or become a safety hazard. Long hair should be arranged in a hairstyle that controls loose hair. Scarves, ribbons and other hair ornaments are not acceptable. Hair color must fall within the normal range of hair colors – blonde, brown, black, red, white, silver, or gray. For example, hair color that is green, purple, blue, bright orange, burgundy, etc., is not allowed in the clinical setting. This applies to both female and male students.
3. Men are to be clean-shaven or wear a neatly trimmed facial hair (beard or mustache).
4. Fingernails must be kept clean and short so that the tips of the nails do not extend past the ends of the fingers. Artificial nails/wraps or acrylic overlays are not permitted in accordance with the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) guidelines. Clear nail polish may be worn, if not chipped or cracked.
5. Jewelry that may be worn, if permitted by the clinical agency, includes:
 - a. One watch with a second indicator (required)
 - b. One single band, smooth, finger ring
 - c. One matching stud earring in each ear lobe
6. No facial, tongue, or body piercings, except pierced ears, are allowed during clinical hours except for cultural or religious related nose studs that can be covered with a small adhesive bandage (e.g., Band-Aid®)
7. Tattoos must not be visible.

Note: The clinical instructor will notify students of additional dress code regulations required by the clinical facility.

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Personal Items

1. A watch with a second indicator is required.
2. Tablet or small laptop computer is required
3. Black ballpoint pens shall be carried for charting or other record keeping unless otherwise specified by the agency.
4. The College and clinical agency do not assume responsibility for your personal articles, i.e., purses, etc. It is suggested that you lock any personal items in the trunk of your car before entering the clinical agency.

When performing a new or unfamiliar skill in the clinical setting, an instructor must be present. In some instances, the instructor may designate an RN to supervise the procedure. If the procedure is to be done immediately and the instructor is unable to reach your unit in time, allow the staff to perform the procedure and you may observe. Students may not perform a procedure that they have not been checked off on in a lab setting. Patient safety is of primary importance.

Unsatisfactory Clinical Performance

All students are expected to maintain standards of conduct suitable and acceptable to the clinical environment. Examples of unsatisfactory conduct are included in the following list, but are not limited to those listed below:

1. Failure to meet 75% of total clinical objectives satisfactorily.
2. Failure to achieve a satisfactory score in a critical skill.
3. Unethical behavior, including, but not limited to, falsification of data, breach of confidentiality, or theft.
4. Putting patients and/or others in emotional or physical jeopardy.

2.7 Costs and Fees

Estimated program costs/fees are available on the Nursing website

The following costs are estimates of the expenses students can expect when entering the nursing program, in addition to regular college fees. Financial assistance is available through the Financial Aid office.

Each student is responsible for his own expenses incurred as a result of injury, illness/health problems, hospitalization, physician's care, etc. Therefore, it is recommended that students secure their own health insurance plan prior to enrollment in the nursing program.

Additional expenses may be incurred during the curriculum, including transportation to and from the clinical setting and parking fees.

2.8 Email Communication

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All email communication from the faculty and staff will be delivered via the official COM email system. Students are expected to check their COM email accounts daily.

2.9 Electronic Devices

All electronic devices (mobile phones, beepers, pagers, etc.) must be turned off or placed in silent mode in the classroom, lab and clinical sites. If a device is heard during class, lab, or clinical, the owner will be asked to leave the learning setting and may not be permitted to return until the next break or learning session.

Mobile phones may only be used in the clinical areas for academic reasons. The nurse and charge nurse must be informed that the mobile device will be only used to access nursing references related to patient care.

Phone calls to the instructor will only be made in non-patient care areas such as break rooms or conference rooms. Personal phone calls will be made before or after the clinical day or during breaks.

2.10 Employment

The faculty recommends that students not work while in nursing school or avoid working hours just prior to class or clinical.

2.11 Faculty Committee Student Representatives

Student representatives are invited to participate as members of the Faculty Council, Curriculum and Recruitment/Retention Committees to provide a student perspective. The designated number of student representatives will be selected at the beginning of the school year by each committee chair. Students may suggest topics for discussion to the Committee Chair at least one week prior to the meeting. Students are not voting members and will be excused during closed sessions.

2.12 Grade Determination & Calculation

Grading criteria for every nursing course will be found in the course syllabus. The instructor will follow these criteria closely when evaluating course work and determining assignment and course grades.

All assignment and test scores will be carried out to the hundredths decimal place and recorded in the course management system. Final grades will be carried out to the hundredths decimal place and reported as whole numbers (no decimals) to the registrar without rounding.

2.13 Grading Scale

The grading scale used in all nursing courses to assign grades may be different than that of other courses at COM:

90.00- 100.00	A
80.00- 89.99	B
75.00- 79.99	C

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60.00- 74.99 D
<60 F

2.14 Graduate Competencies

Nursing students are expected to demonstrate competencies by the time of graduation, as published in the [Differentiated Essential Competencies of Graduates of Texas Nursing Programs \(Revised 10/2010\)](#). The DEC's are the basis of the clinical evaluation tools in each clinical course.

2.15 Graduation Requirements

Graduation requirements are published in the College Catalog. Applicants for graduation from the college must meet the published requirements and deadlines.

BON instructions for new graduates regarding licensure by examination are published at <http://www.bon.texas.gov/exam-eligibility.asp>

2.16 HIPAA Privacy Rule Compliance

Nursing students must comply with the HIPAA Privacy Rule that protects the privacy of individually identifiable health information. Protected health information (PHI) includes all forms of patient-related data including demographic information. PHI is confidential and protected from access, use, or disclosure to unauthorized individuals. Violating the HIPAA Privacy Rule will result in counseling and/or disciplinary action.

Students may discuss de-identified PHI in educational settings for educational purposes that does not contain the following identifiers of the individual patient or of relatives, employers or household members of the individual patient:

- (A) Names;
- (B) All geographic subdivisions smaller than a State, including street address, city, county, precinct, zip code, and their equivalent geocodes, except for the initial three digits of a zip code if, according to the current publicly available data from the Bureau of the Census:
- (C) All elements of dates (except year) for dates directly related to an individual, including birth date, admission date, discharge date, date of death; and all ages over 89
- (D) Telephone numbers;
- (E) Fax numbers;
- (F) Electronic mail addresses;
- (G) Social security numbers;
- (H) Medical record numbers;
- (I) Health plan beneficiary numbers;
- (J) Account numbers;
- (K) Certificate/license numbers;
- (L) Vehicle identifiers and serial numbers, including license plate numbers;
- (M) Device identifiers and serial numbers;
- (N) Web Universal Resource Locators (URLs);

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- (O) Internet Protocol (IP) address numbers;
- (P) Biometric identifiers, including finger and voice prints;
- (Q) Full face photographic images and any comparable images; and
- (R) Any other unique identifying number, characteristic, or code

For more information, go to <http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/privacy/hipaa/understanding/>

2.17 Late Assignments

All course assignments are expected to be completed and submitted **to the assigned faculty** on the specified **due date by 4 p.m.**, unless otherwise stated by the instructor. Absence is not an acceptable excuse for a late assignment.

Clinical

Two points will be deducted from the final course grade for each calendar day an assignment is late, including weekend days and holidays. For example, if the final course grade is 80% and any portion of a specified assignment is one (1) day late the final course grade will be reduced to 78%.

Classroom

Any assignment, including pass/fail, submitted after the due date will earn a grade of zero (0) or fail (F) whichever is applicable.

2.18 Skills Lab Guidelines

The skills labs are used for instruction and skills validation. Students may also use the lab during open lab hours to practice or review skills. Available “open” lab hours will be posted on the lab door.

1. The Skills Lab Coordinator &/or faculty must be present when students are in the lab.
2. Needles are to be disposed of in the red sharps containers located on the medication cart or in the skills lab. If full, the Lab Coordinator needs to be notified.
3. Equipment should be returned to the designated areas. Notify lab coordinator of any equipment in need of repair and/or maintenance.
4. Manikin and equipment use must be approved by the Skills Lab Coordinator or faculty member present in the lab.
5. Students who need assistance with skills can contact the assigned clinical faculty member.

2.19 Skills Validation Requirements

Students must demonstrate competency in all skills prior to being allowed to perform a skill in the clinical setting. Students are required to pass each skill validation examination with a minimum score of 75% or Pass in a Pass/Fail skills demonstration setting. If a student scores less than 75% or Fails in a Pass/Fail setting on the first attempt, one additional attempt to pass the skill will be permitted. The maximum score that can be earned for a repeated skill is 75% or Pass in a Pass/Fail

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requirement.

Skills Courses and Health Assessment Course

1. In the case of an absence, the student must notify the skills instructor at least one hour prior to the validation time. All missed skills validations must be made up within five (5) business days.
2. If a student cannot demonstrate competency in a skill, he/she will not be able to meet the course objectives. (See individual course syllabus).
3. A student must withdraw from the clinical course if unable to progress in the skills or health assessment courses.

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4. Absence in any of the Skills Validations in a clinical course will count toward clinical absence. (See individual course syllabus.)

2.20 Social Networking

Student social networking rules are based on the ANA Principles of Social Networking to protect patient privacy and confidentiality and maintain professional standards of practice.

1. Do not transmit or place online individually identifiable patient information. (See HIPAA Privacy Rule Compliance)
2. Do not interact with patients on social media.
3. Evaluate all social media postings with the understanding that a patient, colleague, educational institution, or employer could potentially view those postings.
4. Take advantage of privacy settings in all personal online activities and separate online personal and professional sites and information.
5. Report posts by peers to the Program Coordinator that reflect incompetent, unethical, illegal, or impaired practice.
6. Participate in the development of nursing student policies and procedures for handling reports of online conduct that may raise legal concerns or be professionally unethical.

<http://www.nursingworld.org/socialnetworkingtoolkit.aspx>

2.21 Student Organizations

The COM Vocational Nurse Student Organization (VNSO) is a recognized College of the Mainland student organization and has representation in the Students' Government Association. VNSO members participate in community help projects, orientation of new students, graduation celebrations, and educational and supportive activities for current students.

2.22 Substance Use/Abuse

The VN Program faculty and staff enforce the college "drug free" policy (See college catalog for further details). Any student exhibiting behavior that suggests impairment related to drugs and/or alcohol will be subject to mandatory drug testing. The student will be escorted to the designated drug testing facility by a faculty member for drug screen testing.



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All testing costs are the responsibility of the student. Drug screening results will be sent directly to the student and the Department Chair and become part of the official student record.

A student who has a non-negative drug test, as determined by the medical review officer, will be dismissed from the nursing program. Students dismissed from the program for non-negative drug screens will be ineligible for readmission to the nursing program for one year and will be required to submit a declaratory order determining eligibility for licensure by examination to the BON prior to consideration for readmission to the nursing program.

Mandatory reporting is required in Sec. 301.404. Duty of Nursing Educational Program to Report of the Texas Nursing Practice Act:

“A nursing educational program that has reasonable cause to suspect that the ability of a nursing student to perform the services of the nursing profession would be, or would reasonably be expected to be, impaired by chemical dependency shall file with the Board a written, signed report that includes the identity of the student and any additional information the Board requires.”

(http://bon.texas.gov/laws_and_rules_nursing_practice_act_2013.asp#Sec.301.404)

Acknowledgment of reading the VN Student Handbook indicates that the student has read and understands the policy on drug screening for the nursing program. Acknowledgment of reading the VN Student Handbook also provides the student's consent for the results of drug screen checks to be released to the COM Director of Nursing.

2.23 Technology Requirements

Every nursing course is Web-enhanced, which requires students to have access to a computer that is connected to the Internet. In addition, a small tablet or iPad is recommended for use in the clinical setting for clinical documentation.

Students will need a working knowledge of word processing and presentation software. Current students can acquire Office 365 Pro Plus at <http://www.com.edu/its/purchasing-software>. This software will remain active as long as you are a current student at COM.

See Distance Education for recommended [hardware and software requirements](#).

2.24 Testing

Course examinations may be administered on-line to evaluate student learning, knowledge, and retention. Students are expected to pass each course examination with a minimum grade of 75%. Prior to final course grade calculation in theory courses, the examination average is calculated. Students must have earned at least a 75% exam average to pass the designated course.

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Policies which govern testing include:

1. Exams will be taken as scheduled.
2. Tardy students may not be allowed to take the exam at that time.
3. The course facilitator or Program Coordinator must be notified by the student if unable to be present for an exam.
4. A student ID or a picture ID is required to access the Innovations Lab.
5. Personal items (e.g., **phones, personal calculators, books, notes, watches, etc.**) must be placed in designated areas at the front or the back of the classroom or testing center during each exam. In the event that faculty find prohibited personal items in the testing area, the student will be escorted out of the examination area, and will be given a grade of zero on the exam.
6. No talking is permitted in the testing area or hallway adjacent to the testing area.
7. Courtesy is expected before, during, and after the exam to avoid disturbing other test takers.
8. If questions arise during a test, the student will raise a hand and wait for the instructor to approach. Questions will be written down by the student and answered in writing by the instructor or the pair will exit the testing area to discuss complex questions.
9. Students may only use computer calculators for exams.
10. Students will use only materials provided by the college for written work during an exam.

Dosage Calculation Examinations

1. During each clinical course, students will be required to successfully pass a 10 item, fill-in-the-blank online Dosage Calculation Examination with 100% accuracy in order to administer medications in the clinical setting.
2. Only computer calculators may be used during the exam.
3. The exam must be completed within thirty minutes
4. Dimensional analysis is required to calculate dosage questions.
5. Rounding should occur at the end of the calculation, in the final answer only, if appropriate.
6. Three (3) attempts will be allowed to successfully pass the exam.
7. If the dosage calculation examination is not past with 100% after the third attempt, the student will not be able to progress in the course, and will a “WF”.
8. Students must remediate with a nursing tutor between attempts.
9. Students desiring to review a test will make an appointment with the designated faculty within the time frame announced by the Course Facilitator.

Communication of Grade Results

Exam grades will be posted in the course management system within 48 hours of test completion.

Test Item Inquiries

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Inquiries must be submitted in writing to the Course Facilitator within 24 hours following the exam. Students must cite authoritative references for the proposed answer to the test question. References need to include at least one of the following:

- a. Required text
- b. Required readings
- c. Class documentation i.e. handouts, audio
- d.

Make-Up Exams

Students will be allowed to make up a missed scheduled examination without penalty, but will **not** be allowed to make-up missed quizzes. The teaching team reserves the right to give a different objective test from the one initially administered, or an essay exam covering unit objectives.

If a student is unable to take the make-up exam on the date set by the course facilitator, a grade of zero will be recorded for the exam, unless there are extenuating circumstances beyond the control of the student that would prohibit them taking the makeup exam(s) on the scheduled date.

2.25 Transportation

Students are responsible for their own transportation and for complying with parking regulations on campus and in the assigned clinical agencies. Clinical facilities include hospitals throughout the Gulf Coast region.

3.0 Support Services

3.1 Financial Aid

All financial aid information and transactions are handled through the Financial Aid Office at College of the Mainland. If you are interested in financial aid, please contact them as early as possible.

3.2 Academic and Personal Assistance

Programs and activities are available through counseling services to assist in student's development of individual potential in the pursuit of his/her academic career and personal goals. Counselors are available to assist students with the following primary services:

Academic Counseling
Personal Counseling
Group Counseling
Tutorial Assistance

Degree Planning
Course Offerings
Registration Planning
Career Counseling

Sources of a more personal nature are also available through the Counseling/Advisement Center. The Nursing Program can be demanding and stressful. It is best to seek assistance early, when you feel you are beginning to have difficulties. There may be times when you discuss problems with a

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faculty member and they refer you to these services.

Students who need assistance with job placement or with job search skills will find that help is available in the Career Services.

Further information on these services is found in the College Catalog.

4.0 Web Resources

Recommended Reference Websites & Evidence Based Practice Resources (*)

- American Academy of Pediatrics – www.aap.org
- American Cancer Society – www.cancer.org
- American Diabetes Association – www.diabetes.org
- American Heart Association – www.heart.org
- American Red Cross – www.redcross.org
- American Nurses Association (ANA) – www.nursingworld.org
- American Nurses Association (ANA) Scope and Standards of Practice - <http://www.nursesbooks.org/ebooks/download/NursingScopeStandards.pdf>
- *Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality – <http://www.ahrq.gov>
- *Academic Center for Evidence Based Nursing (ACE) (USA)- <http://www.acestar.uthscsa.edu>
- Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) Bloodborne Infectious Disease Resources
- <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/bbp/>
- *Cochrane Library – <http://www.cochrane.org>
- Differentiated Essential Competencies for Texas Nursing Graduates (http://bon.state.tx.us/pdfs/publication_pdfs/delc-2010.pdf)
- *Evidence Based Medicine Resource Center – <http://www.ebmny.org/epg.html>
- Excellence in Nursing Education – www.texasgulfcoastnursingeducation.org
- Health Resources & Service Administration – www.ask.hrsa.gov
- *Joanna Briggs Institute for Evidence Based Nursing – <http://www.joannabriggs.edu.au/>
- Medscape – www.medscape.com
- Merck Co. – www.merck.com
- Merck Vaccines – www.merckvaccines.com/srv/gw/home/desktop.jsp?frame=1
- *National Guidelines Clearinghouse – <http://www.guideline.gov>
- National Library of Medicine – www.nlm.nih.gov
- National Library of Medicine's MEDLINE plus – www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus
- National Institutes of Health – www.nih.gov
- National Student Nurses Association – <http://www.nсна.org>
- *Nursing Best Practice Guidelines-<http://www.rnao.org/bestpractice/index.asp>

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- *Oncology Nursing Society Evidence Based Practice Resource Area – <http://onsopcontent.ons.org/toolkits/evidence/>
- Nursing Center of Nursing Journals – www.nursingcenter.com
- Nursing Net of Journals – www.nursingnet.org/journals.htm
- P & G School Programs – www.pgschoolprograms.com
- PubMed – Nat. Library of Medicine – www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/PubMed
- Sigma Theta Tau Honor Society – www.nursingsociety.org
- Texas Board of Nursing – www.bon.state.tx.us
- Texas Department of State Health Services – www.dshs.state.tx.us/schoolhealth/default.shtm
- Texas Nurses Association – www.texasnurses.org
- The Food Allergy & Anaphylaxis Network – www.foodallergy.org
- Transcultural Nursing – www.culturediversity.org
- U.S. Census Bureau – www.census.gov
- U.S. Department of Education – www.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/index.html
- U.S. Food and Drug Administration – www.fda.gov/cber/vaccine/licvacc.htm