College of the Mainland

College of the Mainland
Vocational Nursing Program
Student Handbook
2020-2021

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Dear Nursing Student,

Welcome to our nursing program. We are pleased that you have selected our program to begin your nursing journey. The Nursing Department aims to provide a positive learning environment conducive to learning that promotes goodwill, trust, and respect.

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 vocational nurse.

All our best wishes for your success,

College of the Mainland Vocational Nursing Program

College Mission

College of the Mainland is a learning-centered, comprehensive community college dedicated to student success and the intellectual and economic enrichment of the diverse communities we serve.

College Vision

College of the Mainland will be a valued and vital community partner by enriching our community and preparing our students to thrive in a diverse, dynamic and global environment.

College Values

- Student Success and Academic Excellence
- Continuous Improvement and Accountability
- Mutual Respect and Civility
- Diversity and Inclusiveness
- Innovation and Adaptability
- Campus and Community Collaboration

Vocational Nursing 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 program 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. Gay Reeves. The VN Program has also been directed by Dr. Jere Hammer. Mary Amanda Ordonez is the current 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 mission of College of the Mainland Vocational Nursing Program is to educate and empower nursing students to serve as nurse leaders. Our goal is to enable our students to provide safe and quality nursing care to the diverse communities that we serve. The College of the Mainland Vocational Nursing Program is committed to equip graduate nurses with employer-valued marketable skills to promote compassionate, competent, and ethical nursing care grounded in evidence-based practice.

1.4 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:

1. Demonstrate vocational student nurse responsibilities by following policies and procedures of the Vocational Nursing Program and the clinical facility practice guidelines.
2. Assume responsibility and accountability for the quality of nursing care provided to patients across the lifespan and their families.

3. Provide safe and compassionate nursing care to culturally, ethnically, and socially diverse patients across the lifespan and their families.

4. Assist in the assessment of mental and physical health of patients across the lifespan using a structured data collection tool with primary and secondary sources of information.

5. Analyze focused assessment data to prioritize problems that can be addressed by the nurse.

6. Assist in the development of the plan of care that identifies patient goals/outcomes and nursing interventions utilizing evidence-based practice and in collaboration with patients, their families, and the health care team.

7. Implement the plan of care according to the scope of practice to provide safe, compassionate, ethical nursing care for patients with basic health needs across the lifespan and their families in a variety of healthcare settings.

8. Assists in the evaluation of effectiveness of patient goals and related nursing interventions and assists in modification of the plan of care in response to changing patient needs.

9. Assists in the coordination of human, information, and material resources in providing care for assigned patients and their families.

10. Assists in the evaluation of attainment of patient goals, related nursing interventions, and modification the plan of care in response to changing patient needs across the lifespan.

11. Use standards of nursing practice including the Texas Nursing Practice Act (NPA), the Texas Board of Nursing, accreditation organizations, and rules mandated by the federal, state and local governments to provide care to promote quality and a safe environment for patients, self, and others.

12. Collaborate and communicate in a timely manner with patients, their families, and the health care team to assist in planning, delivering, coordination of patient-centered care to assigned patients across the lifespan.

13. Serve as a health care advocate in activities that focus on improving the safety, quality, and health care of patients across the lifespan and their families.

14. Communicate and manage information using technology to support decision making to improve patient care across the lifespan.

15. Demonstrate responsibility for continued competence in nursing practice and develop insight through reflection, self-analysis, self-care, and life-long learning.

1.5 Program Description

The 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 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.

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 reserves the right to make changes to the student handbook as deemed necessary.

The Vocational Nursing Program has limited enrollment based on staffing and clinical facilities available. The Nursing Program reserves the right to refuse enrollment to any student who does not meet the established criteria for admission. Omission of information and/or falsification of information on the Application for Admission, Health Record, or other forms required by the Program will be cause for dismissal or denial of admission.

2.2 Admission Criteria

To be admitted to the VN Program, the applicant must meet the following basic admission criteria established by the nursing faculty. Current admission criteria can be found on the nursing website at http://www.com.edu/nursing by clicking on the track in which the student will apply.

Successful applicants and alternates admitted to the nursing program must submit the following for final approval for entrance into the program:

1. Submit required clinical readiness documentation.
2. Have clear BON and clinical agency criminal background checks.
3. Have a clear drug screen.

Students admitted or seeking readmission to the COM VN program may not take nursing courses or exams for credit at another nursing program or college while in the COM VN program.

Acknowledgement 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 VN Program admission criteria go to http://www.com.edu/nursing and select the desired track in the menu.

Eligibility for Licensure by Examination

Notice to Students Regarding Licensing

Effective September 1, 2017, HB 1508 amends the Texas Occupations Code Section 53 that requires education providers to notify potential or enrolled students that a criminal history may make them

ineligible for an occupational license upon program completion. The following website provides links to information about the licensing process and requirements: https://www.bon.texas.gov/licensure_eligibility.asp.

Should you wish to request a review of the impact of criminal history on your potential Vocational Nurse License prior to or during your quest for a degree, you can visit this link and request a "Criminal History Evaluation": https://www.bon.texas.gov/licensure_endorsement.asp.

This information is being provided to all persons who apply or enroll in the program, with notice of the requirements as described above, regardless of whether or not the person has been convicted of a criminal offense. Additionally, HB 1508 authorizes licensing agencies to require reimbursements when a student fails to receive the required notice.

Additional 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
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

Updated August 2020

[213.30. Declaratory Order of Eligibility for Licensure](213.30.%20Declaratory%20Order%20of%20Eligibility%20for%20Licensure)

The complete BON documents can be found at:
- 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

2.3 Progression Criteria

Progression criteria established by the faculty and staff include:

1. Students will adhere to the admission and curriculum requirements of the Nursing Program. Current requirements of the Nursing Program take precedence over the catalog requirements under which the student entered College of the Mainland.
2. All nursing courses must be completed in the proper sequence as outlined in the nursing curriculum found in the college catalog.
3. Each nursing course must be completed with a grade of "C" or better in order to progress to the next nursing course.
4. Students must maintain clinical documentation requirements throughout each semester and prior to registering each semester. Students must comply with any newly required clinical documentation mandated by clinical affiliations.
5. If a nursing theory course is failed within a semester, the student must also withdraw from the clinical component for that course. The student may not enroll in any other nursing courses within a semester in which a nursing course is failed.
6. If a student makes below a composite score of 850 on the standardized final exam, the student will be required to complete a remediation assignment.
7. If a clinical course is failed within a semester, the student may remain in the theory course. The student may not enroll in any other nursing courses within a semester in which a nursing course is failed.
8. If a student fails any nursing course during a semester, the student must complete an exit interview at the end of the semester, or after the student has withdrawn or been dismissed from all courses.
9. Maintain at least a 2.0 cumulative GPA throughout the Nursing Program.
10. Demonstrate Good Professional Character as defined by the BON.
11. Adhere to policies stated in the COM Student Handbook and policies stated in the VN Nursing Student Handbook.
12. Students who are pregnant and are prescribed bed rest may withdraw before the "W Date". Students who are pregnant and are prescribed bed rest may be assigned an "Incomplete" after the "W Date".

2.4 Dismissal/Withdrawal Criteria

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

Student-Initiated Withdrawal

Updated August 2020

A student desiring to withdraw from a course must send an email notification to their instructor officially informing them of their desire to withdraw from a course. The student must copy the Nursing Department in the email at nursing@com.edu. A grade of "W" will be recorded on the transcript if the course is dropped on or before the last day to withdraw.

The student will receive a "D" or an "F" according to the grade at the time of withdrawal if the student withdraws after "W" Day or if the student does not officially withdraw from the course by sending the email notification.

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 student who has been withdrawn/dismissed for academic dishonesty will not be allowed to reapply to the Nursing Program.**

The Nursing Department will no longer assign a grade of Withdraw Failing "WF" under any circumstance.

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. The exiting student is responsible for contacting the course facilitator to complete an exit interview **no later than 6 weeks** after the course end date. If a student is allowed to remain in other nursing courses, the student must complete the exit interview at the end of the semester. The student will sign the form and receive a copy. **An exit interview is required for consideration for re-entry into the Nursing Program**. The student will not be permitted to apply for readmission for **5 years** if the Exit Interview is not completed.

2.5 Readmission

Readmission criteria established by the faculty and staff include:
1. All students seeking readmission to the Nursing Program must be in good academic standing and will be subject to those policies in effect at the time of their readmission.
2. All nursing courses must be completed in the proper sequence as outlined in the curriculum found in the college catalog.
3. The student will not be considered for readmission if there are two or more failed nursing courses. The student with two or more failed nursing courses will not be eligible to apply to the VN nor ADN nursing program for a period of **five years** following the last failed nursing course.
4. The student must have an exit interview on file.
5. The student must have a cumulative nursing GPA of at least 2.00.

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6. Nursing courses are only valid for readmission if completed within the previous three years for the semester in which the student will enroll, and in the **program track** specified in Student Planning.
7. The student must apply for readmission in WebAdvisor at least six weeks prior to the beginning of the academic semester for which readmission is being sought.
8. Readmission requirements may cause a delay in being readmitted into the Nursing Program. The student should reapply online as soon as possible.
9. The student will receive an email delivered to their COM email address from the Admission/Progression Committee. The email will indicate readmission status, and/or requirements the student must complete for readmission including, but not limited to, demonstration of competency in previous nursing course work including remediation assignments, updated clinical readiness documents, updated clear background checks, and an updated clear drug screen. All requirements must be met by the scheduled deadline date as specified in the readmission letter.
10. Students denied for readmission into the nursing program may petition the Nursing Admission Committee by sending the petition to nursing@com.edu within 10 business days upon delivery of the readmission outcome letter time stamped by an email delivery receipt. The student will receive an email delivered to their COM email address from the Admission committee in response to the petition. **The email from the Admission committee in response to the petition is final.**
11. Readmission is contingent upon available resources and documentation of clinical readiness. Readmission is only valid for the semester specified on the letter. If the student chooses not to enroll in the semester specified in the letter, the student must notify the Admissions committee. The student must then reapply for the semester in which the student seeks to enroll. Readmission is only valid for the semester specified on the letter. If the student chooses not to enroll in the semester specified in the letter, the student must notify the Nursing Admissions Committee. The student must then reapply for the semester in which the student seeks to enroll. A student may not apply for readmission more than two times for the same courses. A student who has applied for readmission twice and did not register for courses must apply as a new nursing applicant, meet all current eligibility criteria, and must be offered acceptance into the program.

Transfer:

1. Successful admission to the college.
2. Meet all TSI requirements for the college.
3. Establish a nursing academic plan with an Academic Advisor.
4. Review the Pre-Nursing Orientation with an Academic Advisor.
5. Take and pass with a minimum grade of "C" in all prerequisite courses required for the desired track.
6. Students must meet HESI A2 requirements of passing each section with at least a 70%. HESI A2 sections are Math, Reading, and Grammar and Vocabulary.
7. All students seeking transfer to the Nursing Program must be in good academic standing and will be subject to those policies in effect at the time of their transfer. Transfer of nursing courses and/or exams for credit from another nursing program or college are not permitted after the student is admitted nor while the student is seeking readmission.

8. The student must apply for transfer in WebAdvisor **at least three months** prior to the beginning of the academic semester for which transfer is being sought.
9. All students seeking transfer to the Nursing Program must be in good academic standing and will be subject to those policies in effect at the time of their transfer. The Nursing Program Director from the previous institution must send a letter of good standing to nursing@com.edu.
10. All nursing courses must be completed in the proper sequence as outlined in the curriculum found in the college catalog.
11. The student will not be considered for transfer if there are two or more failed nursing courses in the nursing track.
12. The student must send an electronic copy of all course descriptions from the catalog and nursing syllabi to nursing@com.edu.
13. The student must have a cumulative nursing GPA of at least 2.80.
14. Nursing courses are only valid for transfer if completed within the previous three years for the semester the in which the student will enroll, and within the track specified.
15. The student will receive an email from the Admission/Progression Committee. The email will indicate transfer status, and/or requirements that the student must complete for transfer including, but not limited to, demonstration of competency in previous nursing course work including remediation assignments, updated clinical readiness documents, updated clear background checks, and an updated clear drug screen. All requirements must be met prior to the beginning of the semester for the planned enrollment.
16. Transfer is contingent upon available resources.
17. Transfer is only valid for the semester specified on the letter. If the student chooses not to enroll in the semester specified on the letter, the student must notify the Admissions committee. The student must then re-apply for the semester in which the student seeks to enroll. A student may not apply for transfer more than two times for the same program. A student who has applied for twice and does not register for courses must apply as a new nursing applicant, meet all current eligibility criteria, and must be offered acceptance into the program.

2.6 Attendance

2.6.1 Theory/Lab Course Attendance

Students are expected to attend every scheduled session for all classes. Instructors will keep an accurate record of class attendance. An absence is defined as missing half or more of a class period. Excessive absence is defined by nursing faculty as being absent for greater than three classes in nursing theory courses. A student will be given a warning for excessive absences. An instructor-initiated withdrawal may occur if a student continues to be absent after the warning is given.

2.6.2 Punctuality in Theory/Lab Courses

Students arriving after the designated class start time will sit quietly at the back of the class until after the break. Students who are repetitively tardy will be given a warning by faculty. Repetitive tardiness is defined by nursing faculty as greater than six tardies in a single nursing course. Arriving late to class after a specified break also is defined as a tardy and counts toward the six

tardy definition for repetitive tardiness. An instructor-initiated withdrawal may occur if a student continues to arrive late after the warning is given.

2.6.3 Clinical Absences

There will be no excused absences. There are no make-up days for student-related absences. Clinical time is defined by nursing faculty as any clinical-related activity including pre-clinical activities. One-half of a grade point per hour or any portion of an hour will be deducted from the final course grade for each absence. For example, if a student is absent for a twelve hour clinical, six grade points will be deducted from the final course grade. (See the Simulation Lab Absences Policy for Simulation Absences).

Students may not miss more than the maximum number of hours missed due to the combination of being absent from simulation or clinical, including tardiness. Students may not return to the clinical setting for the rest of the clinical day after notifying the instructor of leaving for the day. A student who misses more than the allotted number of hours will receive a grade of "D" if the missed days are prior to the "Drop Date" or prior to the "W Date".

The following are the maximum number of hours a student may miss according to the contact hours in a clinical course:

192 contact hours = up to 24 hours missed

384 contact hours = up to 36 hours missed

2.6.4 Punctuality in Clinical Courses

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 setting 15 minutes or more past the scheduled start time according to the instructor's clock (see Clinical Absences). Each late arrival will be counted as one grade point off the final grade.

2.6.5 Simulation Lab Absences

For every hour or portion of an hour missed of simulation lab, one grade point will be deducted from the final course grade. For example, if a student misses four hours of simulation, four grade points will be deducted from the final course grade. Because simulation hours are clinical hours, missed simulation time is counted toward the maximum number of hours a student may miss in the clinical setting.

2.6.6 Punctuality in Simulation

Students are considered tardy if arriving after the start time of the simulation day. The pre-simulation assignment is considered the "ticket" to class. The student will not be allowed in the simulation lab with an incomplete assignment, and the student will be sent home. Students will be dismissed from simulation for the day and counted absent if arriving to the simulation setting

15 minutes or more past the scheduled start time according to the instructor's clock (see Simulation Lab Absences).

2.7 Behavior/Conduct

Learning Environment

Faculty and staff aim to promote a positive learning environment that is conducive to learning. It is the faculty's belief that the rights of all students, staff, and patients must be preserved. Faculty reserve the right to ask a student who is disruptive and displaying an attitude inconsistent with professional standards to leave the classroom, lab, or clinical setting. In addition to 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. **Failure to comply will result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal from the nursing program and/or college. A student dismissed as a result of disciplinary action will not be allowed to reapply to the Nursing Program.**

Classroom/Lab/Simulation/Clinical

1. Class begins promptly at the beginning of the class period. You should be in your seat and ready to start participating in class at this time.
   a. Always bring the required supplies and be ready to be actively engaged in the learning process. This communicates preparedness and interest.
2. During class or clinical, focus on the objectives for that course.
3. Turn your cellphone off or on silent if it is permitted.
4. Pick up any items you brought into the class including electronics, books, notes, food, and food wrappers.
5. Provide your full attention during class. Do not speak to the person next to you during class. Talking during class is distracting to other students. **Please raise your hand if you have a question.** Other students may have the same question.
6. Do not start putting away your books and supplies before the end of class. This is disruptive to the rest of the class is often when announcements are made.
7. If you know that you will need to leave before the class is over, try to sit as close to the door as possible to decrease noise. (**Refer to the policy on Absences**)
8. Please remain alert and engaged during class. Do not lay your head down on your desk. If you need to take a break, please quietly leave the room.
9. Be respectful and courteous to your classmates and instructors. This includes being quiet while another person is speaking and communicating in a professional tone.
10. Approach your instructors and tutors with a willingness to learn and have specific questions ready. Instructors and tutors can best help you when you have read the material and need clarification on specific content or a specific concept.
11. Speak with your instructors, tutors, and mentors early in the semester. Do not wait until the last week of the semester to determine a strategy for success.

Honesty and Integrity

Students are expected to abide by the following guidelines. **Violation in any of these areas may result in immediate dismissal from a course and/or the program. A student dismissed as a result of disciplinary action will not be allowed to reapply to the Nursing Program.**

The students must:

1. Use their knowledge and skill to complete examinations without referring to others' answers, old examinations, class notes, or other references.

2. Use their own knowledge to write major papers or compile research information. Students shall not plagiarize. *(See COM's Student Handbook for plagiarism definition, discipline and penalties.)* **Students may have a SafeAssign score no greater than 25%.**

3. Respect the opinions of instructors and peers. Students shall not insult, demand, harass, threaten, or degrade instructors, other health professionals, or peers.
4. Follow instructor's directions regarding all assignments including quizzing.

Behavioral/Conduct Counseling

Students may be required to meet with faculty to discuss areas for improvement regarding behavioral performance. The faculty and student will discuss the student's performance and create an action plan. A counseling form will be provided by faculty. The counseling form will be signed by the faculty member and student and filed into the course record. All counseling forms must be returned to faculty within one week, unless faculty have specified an earlier date and/or time. The student will not be allowed in class or the clinical setting if the counseling form has not been returned by the specified date.

2.8 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
    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.

2.9 Clinical Readiness Documentation

Students must provide and maintain current documentation of continuing compliance with clinical requirements defined by assigned affiliating agencies in order to participate in clinical learning experiences. All documentation must be current and must not expire during the entire clinical rotation. Students will not be allowed to register for the upcoming semester if clinical readiness documents will expire for the upcoming semester. **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. **No other CPR certification will be accepted.**

Immunizations/Titers

Hepatitis B Virus (HBV) positive titer

Proof of two Measles, mumps and rubella vaccines and/or positive titers

Varicella (chicken pox) positive titer

Influenza (flu) immunization for current flu season (updated annually)

Combined **Tetanus, Diphtheria and Pertussis** (Tdap) vaccination (updated every 10 years)

Tuberculosis Skin Tests

TB skin testing must be renewed each year. Quantiferon TB tests must be renewed each year.

Physical Examination

The student is required to have a physical examination in accordance with clinical facility requirements.

Health Insurance

Various clinical agencies now require students to have health insurance. Every effort will be made to place students without health insurance coverage at a facility that does not require health insurance. However, progression in the nursing program may be delayed if you do not have health insurance coverage.

Clinical agencies requiring insurance require that you have proof of health insurance at all times during clinical rotations. The student must submit the Nursing Student Health Insurance Information Form by the specified date. Failure to notify the nursing department of a change in health insurance coverage while attending clinical may result in disciplinary action up to dismissal from the nursing program. Providing invalid documents will result in disciplinary action up to dismissal from the nursing program.

You may call or email the nursing department at (409) 933-8425 or nursing@com.edu if you have questions or concerns regarding nursing student health insurance coverage.

Health Status

If a new illness arises or an existing illness worsens, the student must inform the clinical instructor at the beginning of the rotation so that the clinical instructor is aware in the event of an emergency. Failure to report as directed may result in exclusion from classes and clinical rotations until the situation is clarified.

 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.

2.10 Clinical Guidelines

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

Transportation

Students are responsible for their own transportation and for complying with parking regulations on campus and in the assigned clinical agencies. Some home health care agencies require information including driver's license and auto insurance.

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.
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 blood borne pathogens training program.
9. Use devices with safety features provided by the clinical facility.

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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 provide a new physical exam verifying that his/her health status will permit the required level of performance in the clinical agency before the next clinical rotation or class with a lab component. The student will not be able to attend clinical or lab if the student fails to submit a physical exam form verifying health.

A student may not be allowed to attend clinical or lab 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 will inform the clinical or skills 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 and lab settings, 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 down 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 long sleeve, full-length
   b. COM 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 permitted)
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 COM Nursing seal, and COM clinical I.D. attached above the waist by an unadorned badge holder.

7. When agency-provided scrub gowns or suits are required for clinical assignments, students will arrive at the agency in the complete school uniform and change into the agency-provided 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/sprays may be used in the clinical setting as they may be offensive to persons who are ill.

2. Hair styles should conform to the standards accepted in a professional environment. Hair 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 unless worn for cultural or religious reasons and permitted by the clinical agency. 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 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 smooth, single band, finger ring
    c. One pair of matching stud earrings; one 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 piercing.

7. Tattoos must not be visible.

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

Personal Items
1. A watch with a second indicator is required.
2. Black ballpoint pens must be carried for charting or other record keeping unless otherwise specified by the agency.
3. Tablet or small laptop computer is required

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4. The College and clinical agency do not assume responsibility for your personal articles, i.e., purses, etc. 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 a 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 has not been validated in the nursing skills lab setting on campus. Patient safety is of primary importance. Students are not allowed to complete a Major Care Plan on the last day of a clinical rotation unless the student has received permission form the clinical instructor, clinical facilitator, and Director of Nursing.

Unsatisfactory Clinical Performance

All students are expected to maintain standards of conduct suitable and acceptable to the clinical environment. **The student with an unsatisfactory clinical performance may be dismissed from the course or the nursing program, and will not be allowed to apply for readmission. Examples of unsatisfactory conduct include, but are not limited to:**

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.

2.11 Costs and Fees

Estimated program costs are available on the Nursing website.
Each student is responsible for all expenses incurred as a result of injury, illness/health problems, hospitalization, physician's care, etc. Students should secure a personal 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.

2.12 Email Communication

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. Standards of good professional behavior is also expected when sending email communications. Students will not send emails with threatening language or demanding inquiries to faculty or other students. Any inappropriate communications may be grounds for dismissal from the Nursing Program.

2.13 Electronic Devices

All electronic devices (mobile phones, tablets, computers) must be turned off or placed on 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. **Students will only use the instructor's cell phone number for calls or texts related to the clinical setting. For all other inquiries or communications, the student will communicate with the instructor using COM email. (See Behavioral/Conduct policy).**

2.14 Employment

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

2.15 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. 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.

Student representatives **will not represent** other students in any form other than to bring suggested topics to faculty. Students representatives also will not make phone calls, emails, or text messages on behalf of other students seeking information to the Nursing Department, other departments on campus, or any clinical facilities **(See Behavioral/Conduct policy).**

2.16 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.

2.17 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
60.00 - 74.99	D
<60	F

2.18 Testing

Course examinations will be administered online to evaluate student learning, knowledge, and retention. Students are expected to learn content in a cumulative fashion in order to care for patients with progressively more complex problems. Courses are arranged in the nursing curriculum to facilitate this learning process. Prerequisite courses are necessary to achieve the skills and knowledge to practice nursing safely. Therefore, content in prior courses will be considered as testable material in the current course. Each test in this course may incorporate both skills and theory content once that material has been assigned and/or taught. Nursing knowledge cannot always be divided arbitrarily into theory and skills.

Students are expected to pass each course examination with a minimum grade of 75%. Prior to final course grade calculation, the examination average is calculated. Students must have earned at least a **75% exam average to pass** the designated course. Assigned projects and quiz grades will not be counted as part of the "75% average grade" unless specifically designated as part of the 75% weighted grades in a course syllabus. Other assignments which are not part of the 75% weighted average (projects, etc) must be completed to pass the course. The assignment grades will be included in the final course grade only if the student has met the 75% rule above. **(See Behavioral/Conduct policy for failure to follow testing policies).**

Policies which govern testing of unit exams include:

1. Exams will be taken as scheduled.
2. Students must arrive to an exam 15 minutes prior to the exam start time.
3. Students must be in their seat and have the exam downloaded at least five minutes prior to the exam start time.
4. Students may not write on the white board provided for the exam prior to beginning the exam.
5. The instructor will announce the exam password at the test start time.
6. Any student arriving after the exam start time will not be allowed into the testing center. The student must communicate with the course facilitator to take a make-up essay exam. The highest score the student may make on the make-up essay exam is a 75%.
7. The course facilitator or administrative assistant must be notified by the student if unable to be present for an exam.
8. 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. **If the student is displaying an act(s) of academic dishonestly by using a personal item during the exam, the student will be dismissed from the Nursing Program and will not be allowed to apply for readmission.**

9. No talking is permitted in the testing area or hallway adjacent to the testing area.
10. Courtesy is expected before, during, and after the exam to avoid disturbing other test takers.
11. 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 student and instructor will exit the testing area to discuss complex questions.
12. Students may only use the calculator provided by the college for exams.
13. Students will use only materials provided by the college for written work during an exam.
14. A review will be provided upon completion of the exam in ExamSoft. The student is permitted to have up to 10 minutes to review missed answers.
15. A student who is disruptive while reviewing the exam will be escorted out of the testing area and will not be allowed to continue to review the exam.
16. Students may not contest test questions until all students have completed the exam.
17. Students must follow the policy regarding Test Item Inquiries to contest a test item.
18. Students who wish to review a unit exam with an instructor may review the exam up to the date of the next scheduled exam. For example: A student may review exam one prior to taking exam two. The student may not review exam one after taking exam two.

Policies which govern testing of Final Exams include:

1. Exams will be taken <u>as scheduled.</u>
2. Students must arrive to an exam 15 minutes prior to the exam start time.
3. Students must be in their seat and have the exam downloaded at least five minutes prior to the exam start time.
4. Students may not write on the white board provided for the exam prior to beginning the exam.
5. The instructor will announce the exam password at the test start time.
6. Any student arriving after the exam start time will not be allowed into the testing center. The student must communicate with the course facilitator to schedule a make-up essay exam if the exam is administered in ExamSoft. The highest score a may make on a make-up essay exam is 75%. If a student arrives after the start time of a standardized final exam, the student must communicate with the course facilitator to schedule an alternate version of the standardized exam. The highest score the student may make on the standardized final exam is 75%.
7. The course facilitator or administrative assistant must be notified by the student if unable to be present for an exam.
8. 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. **If the student is displaying an act(s) of academic dishonestly by using a personal**

item during the exam, the student will be dismissed from the Nursing Program and will not be allowed to apply for readmission.

9. No talking is permitted in the testing area or hallway adjacent to the testing area.
10. Courtesy is expected before, during, and after the exam to avoid disturbing other test takers.
11. 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 student and instructor will exit the testing area to discuss complex questions.
12. Students may only use the calculator provided by the college for exams.
13. Students will use only materials provided by the college for written work during an exam.
14. A review will be provided upon completion of the final exam in ExamSoft if applicable. The student is permitted to have up to 10 minutes to review missed answers.
15. A review will be provided upon completion of the final exam in the standardized testing if applicable. The student is permitted to have up to 10 minutes to review missed answers.
16. A student who is disruptive while reviewing the exam will be escorted out of the testing area and will not be allowed to continue to review the exam.
17. Students may not contest test questions until all students have completed the exam.
18. Students must follow the policy regarding Test Item Inquiries to contest a test item.
19. Students may not review final exams with faculty.
20. Students may not contest test questions on a standardized 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. Students must arrive to an exam 15 minutes prior to the exam start time.
3. Students must be in their seat and have the exam downloaded at least five minutes prior to the exam start time.
4. Students may not write on the white board provided for the exam prior to beginning the exam.
5. The instructor will announce the exam password at the test start time. Any student arriving after the exam start time will not be allowed into the testing center. Missing the exam due to being late will result in a forfeiture of the exam attempt.
6. Only computer calculators may be used during the exam.
7. The exam must be completed within thirty minutes
8. Dimensional analysis is required to calculate dosage questions.
9. Rounding should occur at the end of the calculation, in the final answer only, if appropriate.
10. Three (3) attempts will be allowed to successfully pass the exam.
11. If the dosage calculation examination is not passed with 100% after the third attempt, the student will not be able to progress in the course, and the student will receive a "WF".
12. A review will be provided upon completion of the exam in ExamSoft. The student is permitted to have up to 10 minutes to review missed answers.

13. A student who is disruptive while reviewing the exam will be escorted out of the testing area and will not be allowed to continue to review the exam.
14. Students may not contest test questions until all students have completed the exam.
15. Students must follow the policy regarding Test Item Inquiries to contest a test item.
16. Students who wish to review a math competency exam with an instructor may review the exam up to the date of the next scheduled math competency exam. For example: A student may review math competency exam one prior to taking math competency exam two. The student may not review math competency exam one after taking math competency exam two.

Final Exam Testing

An appropriate standardized competency test will be given at the end of designated theory courses. The standardized exam conversion score will be used as the final exam grade.

Communication of Grade Results

Exam grades will be posted in the course management system within 48 hours. Students will not receive an exam review for a final exam, including standardized comprehensive exams.

Test Item Inquiries

Inquiries must be submitted in writing to the Course Facilitator **within 24 hours** following the exam review. 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 page numbers
    b. Required readings page numbers
    c. Class documentation i.e. handouts, audio

Make-Up Exams

Students will be allowed to make up a missed scheduled examination but will not be allowed to make-up missed quizzes. The exam make-up day will be set by the course facilitator. The make-up exam for unit exams will be an essay exam covering unit topics. If math problems are required on tests in the course, five math problems also will be on the make-up exam.

The student in a course with a standardized final exam must take a make-up standardized final exam.

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.

Remediation

1. Students are responsible for completion of all required remediation components and documents prior to the due date .
2. Remediation will be required for all exams in which a student is unsuccessful.
3. Remediation will be required for readmission into the nursing program.
4. Remediation will be required if the student scores below a composite score of 850 on the standardized final exam.
5. The student must meet with a faculty member (approved by the course facilitator) to review any exam in which the student receives a grade determined to be less than satisfactory. Please print the remediation form (Exhibit A) found at the end of the student handbook.

Remediation Requirements Specific to Type of Remediation:

Unit Exams:
1. The student must meet with the course facilitator.
2. The student must print the Remediation Form (Exhibit A), and bring the form to a group tutoring session.
3. The form must be signed by the tutor to document attendance.
4. The student must submit 50 correct NCLEX-style questions relevant to the unit exam topics in which the student was unsuccessful to the course facilitator.
5. The course facilitator will verify completion of remediation questions.
6. The student must obtain signatures from the tutor and the facilitator prior to the next exam. If the remediation form is not filled out completely, the student will not be allowed into the exam.

Final Exam:

1. The student must print the Remediation Form (Exhibit A) found at the end of the handbook, and meet with the course facilitator.
2. The student must submit the required remediation assignment(s) according to the remediation letter by the specified due date to nursing@com.edu and to the course facilitator. Failure to submit the completed remediation assignment(s) by the specified due date will result in inability to enroll in the following semester.
3. The course facilitator will verify completion of remediation questions.
4. The student must obtain the signature needed from the course facilitator prior to registration. If the student does not provide proof of the required practice questions, the student will not be allowed to register for the following semester.

Course Failure (for students with **one** course failure):

1. The student must print the Remediation Form (Exhibit A) found at the end of the handbook and meet with the course facilitator.
2. The student must submit the required remediation assignment(s) according to the readmission letter by the specified due date to nursing@com.edu and to the course facilitator. Failure to submit the completed remediation assignment(s) by the specified due date will result in inability to gain readmission.
3. The course facilitator will verify completion of remediation questions.

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4. The student must obtain the signature needed from the course facilitator prior to final approval from the Nursing Admission Committee.
5. If the student does not provide proof of the required practice questions, the student will not be eligible for readmission.

Academic Counseling

Students may be required to meet with the course facilitator, faculty, or the assigned mentor to discuss areas for improvement regarding academic performance. The course, facilitator, faculty, or assigned mentor and student will discuss the student's academic performance, and create an action plan. A counseling form will be provided by faculty. The counseling form will be signed by the faculty member and student, and filed into the course record. All counseling forms must be returned to faculty within one week unless faculty have specified an earlier date and/or time. The student will not be allowed in class lab, or the clinical setting if the counseling form has not been returned by the specified date.

2.19 Graduate Competencies

Nursing students are expected to demonstrate core competencies by the time of graduation, as published in the Differentiated Essential Competencies of Graduates of Texas Nursing Programs (Revised 10/2010). The DECs are the basis of the clinical evaluation tool in each clinical course. VN students must also demonstrate Competencies for Graduates of Vocational Nursing Programs (NLN, 2015).

2.20 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

2.21 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 disciplinary action, and is grounds for dismissal from the Nursing Program.**

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:

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(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);
(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/

2.22 Late Assignments

All course assignments are expected to be completed and submitted **to the assigned faculty** on the specified **due date and time** 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%. Students may only turn in clinical paperwork up until the fourth day after the assignment was due (five days total). Any clinical paperwork turned after four days past the due date will receive a zero.
A student who turns in a clinical assignment past the specified due date but no more than one day late will be assigned a grade of no more than 50%. A student who turns in a clinical assignment past one day late will be assigned a grade of zero.

Any student who foresees the inability to turn in an assignment on time should contact their instructor immediately. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that the assignment has uploaded and save to the platform in which they are submitting the assignment.

Classroom

Any assignment, including pass/fail, submitted after the due date will earn a grade of zero.

2.23 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. Failure to follow Skills Lab Guidelines may result in disciplinary action **(See Behavioral/Conduct).**

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.
6. There should be no food or drink in the lab.
7. Students must ensure their area is tidy before leaving the lab.

2.24 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. Please see individual course syllabi for skills validation criteria.

Clinical Courses
    Absence from any skills validation in a clinical course will be considered a clinical absence. (See individual course syllabus.)

Skills and Health Assessment Courses

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 three (3) business days.
2. If a student cannot demonstrate competency in a skill, he/she will not be able to meet the course objectives and will fail the course. (See individual course syllabus).
3. A student must withdraw from the clinical course if unable to progress in any theory or lab course including VNSG 1122 Vocational Nursing concepts, VNSG 1323 Basic Nursing Skills, VNSG 2331 Advanced Nursing Skills, VNSG 1227 Essentials of Medication Administration, VNSG 1226 Gerontology, VNSG 1331 Pharmacology, VNSG 1429 Medical Surgical I, VNSG 1236 Mental Health Nursing, VNSG 1330 Maternal/Neonatal Nursing, VNSG 1334 Pediatrics, VNSG 1432 Medical Surgical Nursing II, VNSG 1219 Professional Development.

<u>Clinical Courses.</u>

Absence from any Skills Validation in a clinical course will be considered a clinical absence. (See individual course syllabus.)

2.25 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

2.26 Student Organizations

The COM Vocational Student Nurses' Organization (VNSO) is a student organization that participates in community projects, orientation of new students, graduation celebrations, and educational and supportive activities for current students.

2.27 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.

All testing costs are the responsibility of the student. Drug screening results will be sent directly to the student and the Director of Nursing 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.

Mandatory reporting is required in <u>Sec. 301.404. Duty of Nursing Educational Program to Report</u> 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

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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.

2.28 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 required 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.

2.29 Student Concerns

Step 1:   Student meets with the faculty member(s) involved to attempt to solve the problem. If the concern is not resolved, the student must document the concern and obtain the instructor's signature (Exhibit B found at the end of the handbook).

Step 2:   If there is no agreement reached in Step 1 and the student wishes to continue the appeal, the student should communicate the problem in writing and the intent on Exhibit B for further appeal to the meet with the Course Facilitator. The Course Facilitator will set a date and time to meet with the student and instructor. If the concern is not resolved, the student must document the concern and obtain the Course Facilitator's signature (Exhibit B found at the end of the handbook).

Step 3:   The Course Facilitator and Director of the Nursing Program will meet with the student and faculty member to review the problem. If an agreement cannot be reached that is mutually satisfactory to both parties, the student could proceed with the formal appeal process after obtaining the Director of the Nursing Program's signature (Exhibit B found at the end of the handbook).

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	Degree Planning
Personal Counseling	Course Offerings
Group Counseling	Registration Planning
Tutorial Assistance	Career Counseling

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

3.3 Students with Disabilities Statement

Any student with a documented disability needing academic accommodations is requested to contact Holly Bankston at 409-933-8520 The Office of Services for Students with Disabilities is in the Enrollment Center, Room 158. http://www.com.edu/student-services/counseling.php

Students who would like to receive reasonable academic accommodations on the basis of disability must:

1. Self-identify
2. Provide documentation of the disability.
3. Request accommodation.

3.4 Mentorship

Students are assigned a mentor while in the Nursing Program. The student is required to meet with his/her mentor once each semester. The student and mentor will sign a mentoring contract during the first mentorship meeting (Exhibit C).

4.0   Web Resources

Recommended Reference Websites & Evidence Based Practice Resources (*)

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- 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.nsna.org
- *Nursing Best Practice Guidelines-http://www.rnao.org/bestpractice/index.asp
- *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.html

5.0 Forms
Exhibit A Remediation Form

Student: _____   Date: _____

Course: _____   Exam: _____   Grade: _____

Please check all categories that a student performed below 75%.

NCLEX-VN Test Plan A) Safe and Effective Care Management ☐ Coordinated Care ☐ Safety & Infection Control B) ☐ Health Promotion & Maintenance C) ☐ Psychosocial Integrity D) Physiological Integrity ☐ Basic Care & Comfort ☐ Pharm & Parenteral Therapies ☐ Physiological Adaptation ☐ Reduction of Risk Potential	
Nursing Process ☐ Assessment ☐ Analysis/Diagnosis ☐ Outcomes/Planning ☐ Implementation ☐ Evaluation	
RN Nursing Body Systems ☐ **Anxiety Disorders** ☐ **Cardiovascular** ☐ **Conception & Fetal Development** ☐ **Dissociative Disorders**	

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☐ **Eating Disorders** ☐ **Endocrine** ☐ **Family Planning** ☐ **Gastrointestinal** ☐ **Hematologic** ☐ **High Risk Neonatal Conditions** ☐ **High-Risk Pregnancy** ☐ **Immune** ☐ **Integumentary** ☐ **Labor and Birth** ☐ **Labor and Birth—Complications** ☐ **Mood Disorders** ☐ **Musculoskeletal** ☐ **Neonatal Assessment and Care** ☐ **Neurological** ☐ **Personality Disorders** ☐ **Postpartum Care** ☐ **Postpartum Care—Complications** ☐ **Pysch Disorders of Child &** **Adolescent** ☐ **Psych Disorders of the Elderly** ☐ **Psych Sexual Disorders** ☐ **Psych Sleep Disorders** ☐ **Renal/Urinary** ☐ **Reproductive** ☐ **Respiratory** ☐ **Routine Prenatal Care** ☐ **Schizophrenia** ☐ **Sensory** ☐ **Somatic Disorders** ☐ **Substance Abuse Disorders**	

Student please complete the following:

I studied/prepared for this exam by doing the following:

☐ Reading prior to class
☐ Reading after class and/or before the exam
☐ Reviewing class handouts/notes
☐ Participating in a study group
☐ Attending tutoring _____ times
☐ Doing NCLEX review questions

- ☐ Using online resources available with the textbook
- ☐ Other: _____

  _____

I missed exam questions mainly due to:

- ☐ Not remembering the content
- ☐ Missing key words in the stem or answers
- ☐ Read too much into the question (assumption)
- ☐ Not understanding the question
- ☐ Not prioritizing
- ☐ Narrowing the answer to 2 choices but choosing the wrong answer
- ☐ Application
- ☐ Guessed at the answer
- ☐ I was unprepared
- ☐ Other: _____

  _____

Learning Contract:

I understand that this remediation contract is to help me improve in the course and throughout the nursing program. I understand that I will complete at least three remediation strategies discussed with nursing faculty by the specified deadline.

I agree to complete at least three remediation strategies prior to _____. I also understand that completion of remediation strategies prior to the deadline are the student's responsibility. Completion is required for entry into the next exam.

The three activities that I and the nursing faculty member agree upon are:

1. **_50 Correct EAQ Questions pertinent to the next unit exam prepared by the Instructor_____**
2. **_____**
3. **_____**

Additional changes I will make prior to the next exam include:

_____

_____

_____

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_____ _____

Student Signature **Date**

I agree with and support the required remediation strategies documented with the student.

_____ _____

Faculty Signature **Date**

Faculty: Please retain a copy for your course archive, give a copy to the student & the student's mentor.

Exhibit B

Student Concerns Form

Student's Name:

COM ID:

Date:

Student's Concern in Detail:

Student's Expected Outcome related to the concern:

Instructor's Outcome to student concern in detail:

Concern Resolved?

_____   _____

Student Signature   **Date**

_____   _____

Instructor Signature   **Date**

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Student's Name:

COM ID:

Date:

Student's Concern in Detail:

Student's Expected Outcome related to the concern:

Course Facilitator's Outcome to student concern in detail:

Concern Resolved?

_____   _____

Student Signature   **Date**

_____   _____

Instructor Signature   **Date**

_____   _____

Course Facilitator Signature   **Date**

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Student's Name:

COM ID:

Date:

Student's Concern in Detail:

Student's Expected Outcome related to the concern:

Instructor's Outcome to student concern in detail:

Concern Resolved?

_____   _____

Student Signature   Date

_____   _____

Instructor Signature   Date

_____   _____

Course Facilitator Signature   Date

_____   _____

Director of Nursing Signature   Date

6.0 Consent

Instructions: After reading the VN Nursing Student Handbook, please review the BlackBoard acknowledgement and take the BlackBoard test acknowledging receipt and understanding of all policies in this handbook.