# Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RN-BSN Mission Statement</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RN-BSN Philosophy</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADA Statement</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement Regarding Financial Aid</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Learning Outcomes</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Background Check, Drug Screening, Student Health Records, CPR &amp; other</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Uniform Guidelines for Leadership Practicum</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership Practicum NURS 4404</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Code of Conduct</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidentiality</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grading</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appeals</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Progression &amp; Readmission</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Introduction

The Georgia Highlands College Nursing Department has prepared this handbook to inform the RN-BSN students of the policies and guidelines specific to this online nursing program. This handbook serves as a supplement to the Georgia Highlands College catalog, which covers the general institutional policies as they relate to all students. It is the responsibility of each nursing student to review the handbook independently and to refer to it as needed during his/her enrollment in the nursing program. All statements in the RN-BSN Nursing Student handbook or announcements of present Nursing Program policies are subject to change at any time. Changes will be posted on the GHC RN-BSN website, in D2L RN-BSN course announcements, and in student D2L email.

Mission Statement

To provide educational opportunities designed to produce a baccalaureate graduate nurse who demonstrates professional, ethical and accountable behaviors, interpersonal communication, comprehensive assessment, clinical decision-making and collaboration skills, teaching and learning capabilities, and provides evidence-based practice and leadership in diverse and complex health care settings.

Philosophy

The philosophy of the Georgia Highlands College RN-BSN Program is congruent with the philosophy of Georgia Highlands College to maintain an online teaching/learning environment which promotes inclusiveness, accessibility, and provides learning opportunities, programs and services of excellence in response to documented needs. The RN-BSN online program was started in the fall of 2013 to enable ASN and diploma graduates with an RN license in the state of Georgia to obtain their BSN in an accessible, affordable and valuable environment. The RN-BSN faculty is dedicated to preparing BSN graduates to practice as competent, caring professionals with effective communication and
collaboration skill. This is congruent with the core components and competencies as outlined in the Educational Competencies for Graduates of Baccalaureate Degree Nursing Programs. All nursing students must abide by the policies identified in the RN-BSN Student Handbook and polices of Georgia Highlands College: http://www.highlands.edu/site/student-rights

ADA Statement

Any student in need of accommodation based on the impact of a disability should make an appointment with the Student Support Services at 706-295-6336 to coordinate reasonable accommodation. Please contact your course faculty to discuss your needs confidentially.

Statement Regarding Financial Aid

Students receiving financial aid: Federal regulations state that if a student did not attend classes and received failing grades, the grades were not earned and financial aid needs to be reduced accordingly. Withdrawing from one or all of your courses can affect your Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) status, which could result in the loss of future financial aid eligibility. If you withdraw from all of your courses, you may also be required to return a portion of your financial aid award to GHC.

Please visit the Financial Aid website at https://www.highlands.edu/financial-aid/ for details and specific information on the following topics:

- Check My Aid Status
- Checklist
- Deadlines
- FAFSA 101
- FAQ
- Federal Student Aid
- Federal Work Study
- Forms
- Grants
- Helpful Resources
- HOPE Scholarship
- Loans
- Policies
- Satisfactory Academic Progress
- Scholarships
- State Student Aid
- Transfer Students
- Transient Students
- Verification
Student Learning Outcomes

Students will:

➢ Integrate knowledge gained from the arts, sciences and nursing to deliver safe, therapeutic nursing care.

➢ Apply principles of leadership/management, and evidence-based practice to influence healthcare outcomes.

➢ Synthesize reliable evidence and research from multiple sources to improve clinical judgments, nursing practice, and patient outcomes.

➢ Manage care to achieve quality, cost effective outcomes in the delivery of health care for individuals, families and populations.

➢ Explore the impact of political, financial, regulatory and environmental agencies on patient-care outcomes and nursing practice.

➢ Utilize effective communication and collaboration skills within an inter-disciplinary team to provide patient-centered and evidence-based nursing care.

➢ Develop health promotion and disease prevention strategies to assist individuals, families, groups, and community across the lifespan.

Background Check, Drug Screening, Student Health Records, CPR, Other Requirements

➢ All students accepted into the program are required to provide proof of unencumbered RN licensure, current BCLS/CPR, and a copy of current state issued drivers’ license for purpose of identification.

➢ Students must create and maintain an account with the clinical placement management service currently used by the RN-BSN program.

➢ NURS 4404 requires satisfactory completion of the on-site leadership practicum component to successfully complete the course. A background check, drug screen, proof of negative tuberculin screening, influenza vaccination, and any additional requirements of the practicum
facility must be current in the clinical placement management service prior to enrollment in NURS 4404.

➢ If a student is denied placement (or continued placement) with a preceptor by a healthcare facility due to results of a criminal background check, drug screen, or any professional or ethical issues, the student must meet course faculty and program director to evaluate the cause. All attempts will be made to find substitute practicum placement. However, completion of practicum hours is a condition of the course and program. Inability to complete the practicum may result in course failure and the student not being able to graduate with the BSN degree. Random drug screens may be done at the discretion of the healthcare facility or nursing faculty should questionable behavior occur while a student is engaged in course related activities at a healthcare agency.

**Student Uniform Guidelines for Leadership Practicum**

The following guidelines are designed to encourage a professional image of the RN-BSN student and promote infection control and safety for patients, families, students, and others. Any student who does not comply with these guidelines while participating in the practicum will be required to leave the healthcare facility for that day. All practicum hours/time for that day will be forfeited. The student will be required to meet with the course instructor and program director before continuing practicum activities.

➢ A white laboratory coat is required to be worn by all RN-BSN students when in the healthcare setting. The lab coat should be clean, wrinkle-free, and worn over appropriate clothing (business casual). No halter tops, shorts, jeans or cut off pants. Proper shoes (business casual) required; no open-toed shoes permitted.

➢ GHC ID badge with student’s picture and name must be clearly visible and worn on the lab coat during all practicum experiences.

➢ If the healthcare facility requires the student to obtain and wear a student a facility issued ID badge, the student must comply.
➢ Facial hair must be neatly trimmed, finger nails should be short, polish-free, and not extending beyond the tips of the fingers.

➢ Artificial nails are not permitted. Jewelry should be limited to a watch, wedding ring, and one pair of small, stud earrings.

➢ No other jewelry permitted on visible body parts. Multiple earrings in the ears, eyebrows, lips, or nose jewelry are not acceptable in the healthcare setting.

➢ Tattoos must be covered and not visible while in the healthcare setting.

➢ Personal hygiene is expected. Students are not permitted to wear perfume, cologne, heavy makeup or artificial eyelashes in the healthcare setting.

➢ Hair should be neatly groomed and off the shoulders.

**NURS 4404 Leadership Practicum (preceptorship)**

Setting-up preceptorship is a lengthy process and requires communication between students, course faculty, clinical placement coordinator, and potential preceptor. During active online course sessions, the required avenue of communication is D2L email. GHC email may be used between course sessions. Students should monitor emails frequently (3 to 4 times per week) during active course sessions. Students are expected to respond to all emails in a timely manner (24 to 48 hours) regarding faculty questions/concerns (applies to any course).

➢ Changing employment after practicum set-up has begun: Any student changing employment to another hospital/agency after the practicum set-up has begun (set-up begins at least one semester prior to practicum course) should be aware that the previous employer, where preceptorship arrangements were established, may choose not to permit students to participate in practicum activities once employment has terminated. Students should be aware that time constraints may interfere with practicum arrangements with the new employer, which could delay completion of NURS 4404 and program completion. The RN-BSN faculty fully support any student’s decision regarding the changing of employers or position. However, in these
circumstances, we cannot guarantee practicum placement in a specific course session.

➢ Reminder: Students who fail to communicate as needed with faculty, clinical placement coordinator, or who fail to maintain a current clinical placement management account will not be enrolled in NURS 4404.

**Code of Conduct**

➢ Students enrolled in the Health Sciences Programs at Georgia Highlands College are expected to adhere to a professional standard of conduct presenting a professional image, demeanor, and behavior in the healthcare facilities and within the online classes. The Code of Conduct is based on policies and procedures that are supported by Georgia Highlands College [http://www.highlands.edu/site/student-rights](http://www.highlands.edu/site/student-rights) and various clinical agencies.

➢ Students are always required to perform nursing related activities in a lawful, safe and effective manner. Students participating in Leadership Practicum (NURS 4404) will not perform direct patient care. Specific instructions will be provided in the course. Students will maintain a respectful, sensitive, and compassionate relationship with faculty, healthcare facility personnel and/or clients, and online classmates.

➢ Students are responsible for their behavior (verbally or written) in online course(s) and healthcare facilities. Any unprofessional or unethical behavior in either setting will not tolerated. Documentation of students who have demonstrated unethical, unsafe, or unprofessional conduct are at risk of probation or dismissal from the Health Sciences Programs at Georgia Highlands College. The Code of Conduct is not a limiting document but serves as a guideline. Any student in possible violation of the GHC Code of Conduct will immediately be required to meet with the Dean of Health Sciences and the RN-BSN faculty.

➢ Reports of possible violation regarding the Code of Conduct as described in the RN-BSN handbook or violation of the GHC Code of Conduct will be promptly investigated.
➢ Students are responsibility to report any impairment that he/she is experiencing or the suspected impairment of a classmate that could create safety risks for the healthcare setting (employees, patients, visitors, other students and/or physical environment).

➢ Inappropriate conduct (in any form) directed toward peers, faculty, or others may include (but is not limited to) offensive language, criticism of others, unprofessionalism, academic dishonesty, and/or unethical behavior.

For detailed information, refer to Georgia Highlands College Student Handbook, and GHC Academic Integrity Policy.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality is required in the healthcare environment and in the online learning platform. Students are required to adhere to client confidentiality including but not limited to written, printed, verbal or observed information and status. No patient name or hospital/facility identifiers/information should appear in online discussions or assignments as this would be in violation HIPPA or confidentiality.

Attendance Policy

RN-BSN students are encouraged to take advantage of the opportunities presented for interaction with faculty and classmates in the online courses. Students are expected to prepare for and engage in the prescribed online learning experiences. General schedule for online classes: Each week begins on Monday at 1200 (00:00 am) and ends on Sunday at 1159 (11:59 pm). Exception to this schedule: The first week of some classes that begin mid-semester may start mid-week instead of Monday. In addition, week (8) in some sessions are shorter and may end in mid-week. Students should be cognizant of these differences and should pay attention to all assignment due dates. It is the student’s responsibility to access the GHC academic calendar for course session start dates, withdrawal dates, end dates, and any recognized student holidays. The Desire to Learn (D2L) system requires regular maintenance and updates, and will not be available during specified times. Each student is responsible for checking D2L for date/times of scheduled maintenance.
➢ Attendance is crucial to benefit from the courses in this program, and students are expected to be active participants in course activities. Absences from online classes are discouraged. Students should log into courses several times per week to check for instructor feedback, announcements and email. Discussion board forums, assignments and other learning activities should be submitted by the posted due date and time.

➢ Students must be proactive in informing the course faculty if an assigned activity cannot be submitted by the due date. The course instructor must be notified through D2L email prior to the posted assignment due date.

➢ Faculty understand that emergencies can arise at any time. However, it is the responsibility of the student to contact the course instructor when there is a legitimate reason for submitting an assignment past the due date. Work obligations are not an acceptable reason for late submission of course assignments.

Grading Policy

All RN-BSN courses require a minimum grade of a “C” to pass the course. Grades are not released early or by telephone. In addition to earning a course grade of “C”, students enrolled in NURS 4404 (Leadership Practicum) must receive a “satisfactory” performance evaluation from their preceptor to successfully pass the course. An “unsatisfactory” evaluation will be investigated and may result in the student earning a course grade of “F” and being required to repeat the course.

➢ If a grade of “D” or “F” is earned in any RN-BSN course, the course must be successfully repeated (minimum grade of “C”) to remain in the program. The student may not enroll in any other RN-BSN courses until the repeated course is successfully completed.

➢ RN-BSN students may have only one incidence of failure (grade less than “C”) for any nursing course in the program. Failure of more than one RN-BSN course (or more than one failure of the same course) will result in dismissal from the program and the student being ineligible for readmission.
Students in NURS 4404, Leadership Practicum, are responsible for any property (ID badge, etc.) issued by the healthcare facility or primary location of the practicum.

**Appeals Process-Grade Appeal Policy**

Georgia Highlands College RN-BSN program adheres to the GHC [Grade Appeal Policy](#).

**Progression and Readmission**

To progress in the RN-BSN program, the student must maintain a C or better in all nursing courses. If a student is not enrolled in RN-BSN nursing courses for a period of one year (3 semesters), the student will be required to reapply to the nursing program (and GHC if applicable). There is no guarantee of re-admission.

- Not all RN-BSN nursing courses are offered each semester. Students should follow the Plan of Study (POS) chosen at the time of initial enrollment in the program. A change in the student’s POS may affect the expected date of program completion. A conference with the program director is recommended when a student wishes to change their POS.

- Students who have been dismissed from the RN-BSN program are considered ineligible for readmission to the RN-BSN program at Georgia Highlands College.