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Nursing Student

Handbook

2022-2023



Georgia Highlands College
Department of Nursing



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INTRODUCTION

The Georgia Highlands College Nursing Department has prepared this handbook to inform the nursing students of the policies and guidelines specific to the 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 Nursing Student handbook or announcements of present Nursing Program policies are subject to change at any time without notice. Changes will be posted on the nursing web site at <https://sites.highlands.edu/nursing/> and a handout of the change will be provided for the student. Changes may also be communicated electronically via email and the learning management system.

PHILOSOPHY

The Georgia Highlands College Nursing Program was established in 1971 based on the identified need to provide a two-year nursing degree for the citizens of Floyd County and surrounding communities.

The nursing faculty agree that education is essential to the intellectual, physical, economic, social, emotional, cultural, and environmental well-being of individuals and society and that education should be geographically and physically accessible and affordable. In support of this philosophy, the nursing program maintains a teaching/ learning environment which promotes inclusiveness and provides educational opportunities, programs and services of excellence in response to the needs of communities we serve.

We integrate the National League for Nursing Associate Degree Program Learner Outcomes, the Quality and Safety Education for Nurses competencies, and the American Association of Colleges of Nursing Essentials. We adhere to the American Nurses Association Standards of Professional Nursing Practice and the Code of Ethics. The core values of accountability, caring, excellence and scholarship provide a foundation that prepares associate degree nurses to collaboratively improve the health of individuals and communities. These values are the cornerstone of the program and are modeled by faculty through mentoring, classroom instruction, and clinical education in a supportive learning environment. The frequent individual interactions between faculty and students offer opportunities for students to learn professional roles.

The faculty believe that associate degree education provides the basis for acquiring nursing professional knowledge and role formation. We subscribe to Patricia Benner's stages of learning and skill acquisition. We utilize Benner's educational continuum to guide the progression of student learning from novice to advanced beginner through common to complex health concepts. We utilize Jean Giddens' conceptual framework for delivery of a concept-based curriculum with a focus on experiences across population groups. This concept-based curriculum fosters critical thinking and can be applied across the lifespan and throughout the health-illness continuum.

MISSION STATEMENT

The Georgia Highlands College Nursing Program reflects the mission statement of the Georgia Highlands College. The curriculum is designed to provide educational opportunities designed to produce competent entry-level nurse generalists who use a collaborative approach to provide excellent nursing care for diverse populations that support dignity, integrity, and personal growth of clients. While incorporating quality improvement principles and the use of informatics, the graduate will be able to deliver safe, client-centered care using sound nursing judgment and evidence-based practice.

The program produces graduates who strive for life-long learning through a spirit of inquiry and deepening professional identity.

Application of these principles is illustrated by the student learning outcomes:

- Outcome 1: Integrate understanding of multiple dimensions of safe, ethical, client-centered care with respect for diverse individuals, families, local and global communities.
- Outcome 2: Fulfill the role of the professional nurse in an inter-professional team through the use of effective communication, teamwork, and collaboration.
- Outcome 3: Value continuous improvement in clinical practice using new knowledge when creating individualized plan of care based on client values, clinical expertise, and current evidence.
- Outcome 4: Implement quality measures that improve outcomes for clients, designees, and communities.
- Outcome 5: Model effective use of strategies to reduce risk of harm to self and others.
- Outcome 6: Utilize information and technology skills essential for providing safe, quality client care.

STUDENT POLICIES

All nursing students must abide by the policies of the Department of Nursing, in addition to the policies of Georgia Highlands College and the Code of Conduct as they appear in the GHC student handbook. Violations in nursing program policy will result in student contracts. Repeated infractions may result in dismissal from the program.

I. Core Performance Standards

A. Performance Standards and Activities/Abilities

Nursing applicants must be able to perform the following functions for admission and progressing in the nursing program.

Performance Standard	Activity/Ability
<p>Critical thinking ability sufficient for clinical judgment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify cause/effect relationships in clinical situations • Develop nursing care plans, evaluate the plan of care and revise as appropriate • Analyze and use assessment findings to plan and implement care for clients and families • Use relevant data to support the decision making process • Identify priorities of care based on analysis of data • Manage multiple priorities in stressful situations • Respond instantly to emergency situations • Exhibit arithmetic competence that would allow the student to read, understand, and perform calculations for computing dosages • Solve problems and make valid rational decisions using logic, creativity, and reasoning
<p>Interpersonal abilities sufficient to interact with individuals, families, and groups from a variety of social, emotional, cultural and intellectual backgrounds.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish rapport (relationship) with clients/colleagues • Maintain therapeutic relationships with clients and colleagues • Respect the rights of others • Work effectively in small groups as a team member and as a team leader • Practice verbal and non-verbal therapeutic communication • Recognize terms or events that disrupt normal lives and institute appropriate interventions to help resolve adverse situations

<p>Gross and fine motor abilities sufficient to provide safe and effective nursing care.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perform physical activities necessary to do basic nursing skills such as putting on sterile gloves, donning mask and gown, attaching blood pressure cuff, etc. • Use appropriate hand washing technique • Provide or assist with activities of daily living such as bed bath, oral hygiene, positioning clients, making an occupied and unoccupied bed • Manipulate instruments, supplies, and equipment with speed, dexterity, precision, and adequate eye-hand coordination • Administer oral and parenteral medications • Perform electronic keyboarding/documentation and/or extensive writing with a pen and/or pencil • Maintain immobilization devices such as traction equipment and casts • Perform cardiopulmonary procedures
<p>Auditory abilities sufficient to monitor and assess health needs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hear monitor alarms, emergency signals, ringing phones, telephone interactions, and cries for help • Distinguish sounds with background noise ranging from conversational levels to high pitch sounding alarms • Perceive and receive verbal communication from clients and members of the health team • Tolerate occasional exposure to loud and unpleasant noises • Hear and understand muffled communication without visualization of the communicator's mouth/lips and within 20 feet • Distinguish changes in tone and pitch such as when listening to a client's breathing characteristics • Distinguish normal from abnormal heart and lung sounds using a stethoscope or modified stethoscope
<p>Tactile ability sufficient for physical assessment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perform palpation, functions of physical examination and/or those related to therapeutic intervention • Wear gloves and other protective devices • Perform all skills requiring use of hands • Palpate for pulses, temperature, texture, hardness or softness, landmarks, etc.

<p>Visual ability sufficient for observation and assessment necessary in nursing care.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perform basic nursing skills such as insertion of a catheter, insertion of an IV, counting respirations, preparing and giving medications • Observe client responses (level of consciousness, breathing patterns) and recognize subtle physical change • Read small print, gauges, thermometers, measuring cups, syringes, and other equipment • Discriminate colors, changes in color, size, continuity of a body part • Accurately prepare and administer medications • Identify hazards in the environment (safety rails, restraints, water spills and harmful situations e.g. insects) • Demonstrate sufficient visual ability to load a fine (10-0) suture onto needle holders with/without corrective lens while wearing safety glasses • Visualize written words and information on papers and on a computer screen
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B. Inability To Meet Core Performances

If a physical and/or mental health condition arises that interferes with the student being able to meet the core performance standards, the student must submit a physician’s release documenting the student’s ability to meet the core performance standards before continuing or re-entering the program.

C. Disability Statement

Any student who feels he or she needs accommodation due to a disability should make an appointment with Student Support Services on any campus. For additional information, contact: Cartersville- dmorgan@highlands.edu or 678-872-8012, Paulding- sss@highlands.edu or Floyd-706-368-7538 or kreyes@highlands.edu and Marietta- agriggs@highlands.edu to coordinate reasonable accommodations. Please contact the instructor/mentor to privately discuss this matter.

D. Criminal Background Checks and Drug Screens

Criminal background checks and drug screenings are required for clinical practice by institutions used by the nursing program for the clinical experiences associated with the nursing courses. A student will be required to participate in these checks upon admission to the program and at least annually while in the program. Criminal background checks and drug screenings are to be performed through AdvantageStudents (www.advantagestudents.com) as required by many of the clinical facilities. All criminal background checks and drug screenings will be at the

expense of the student. Clinical experience is a component of all required nursing courses. A course cannot be satisfactorily completed without completing the clinical component of the course. Should a student be denied placement by a clinical facility related to results on a criminal background check or drug screening, the student will be dismissed from the program with no opportunity for readmission.

E. Statement Regarding Financial Aid

This message only applies to students receiving financial aid: Federal regulations state that if a student did not attend classes and received failing grades, then the grades were not earned and financial aid needs to be reduced accordingly. **Please be advised that any student receiving a 0.00 GPA will be required to prove that the 0.00 GPA was earned by attending classes or completing requirements for each class.** Students who have earned at least one passing grade for the semester will not be affected by this regulation. If a student has properly withdrawn from all classes, the student's financial aid should be adjusted from the time they signed the withdrawal form.

II. Student Uniform Policy

Student uniforms project the image of professionalism upheld by the nursing faculty. The following regulations are designed to define the image of the professional nurse based on cultural influences, infection control and client safety standards and issues.

A. Clinical Attire

1. The laboratory coat

- a. The lab coat will be white, clean and wrinkle-free.
- b. Portrait picture name badge should be on the lab coat above the waist.
- c. The student insignia should be worn on the left sleeve, three inches down from shoulder seams.
- d. The lab coat should be worn over the student uniform or appropriate professional clothing as required during certain clinical rotations.
- e. The lab coat must be removed prior to providing client care.

2. Student Uniform

- a. The complete student uniform should be worn during Georgia Highlands College affiliate experiences. Students are to use professional judgment when wearing the uniform in the community.
- b. The uniform must be clean and neat to present a professional appearance and to minimize cross-contamination.
- c. A clean, plain white, black, or royal blue crew neck tee-shirt **must** be worn under the male top and is optional for females. The tee-shirt can be short or long sleeve.
- d. All pants should fit loosely to allow for freedom of movement and cover undergarments when giving client care with a hem that comes to the top of the shoe.
- e. Undergarments must be worn under the uniform.
- f. A clean, plain royal blue warm-up jacket may be worn over the uniform (optional, if desired). A fleece royal blue jacket may be worn only in the

- classroom.
- g. White, brown or black shoes with matching laces must be clean and the shoes must be polished. The shoes should be standard nurse's shoes or plain white, brown or black nonporous or leather athletic shoes. Clogs are acceptable; however, they must be solid (no weave, no open toe) and must have a heel strap.
 - h. Socks must be worn.
 - i. The following items are a part of the complete clinical uniform and must be worn with the uniform:
 - i. portrait picture name badge
 - ii. stethoscope
 - iii. watch with the ability to compute time in seconds
 - iv. black pens
 - v. pen light
 - vi. bandage scissors
 - j. student insignia for the uniform should be worn on left sleeve of the top
3. When wearing the uniform, the hair must be neat, clean and secured off the shoulder and must not interfere with client care. No elaborate ornamentation or unnatural hues are allowed. Facial hair must be neatly trimmed and clean.
 4. The nails should be clean, polish free, and not extended beyond the tips of the fingers. Artificial nails are not allowed for infection control purposes.
 5. For professional image and infection control, acceptable jewelry while in uniform are: watches; wedding bands; and one pair of small, plain stud earrings if the ears are pierced. If the student has to wear tragus earrings, then only one set of earrings are allowed. Pierced eyebrows, nose, lips, or tongue jewelry are unacceptable while in uniform. No gages or spacers. No necklaces that would drape onto the patient.
 6. Tattoos may be visible if below the neck and are not offensive or contain profanity. The faculty reserves the right to determine appropriateness. Tattoos above the neck or on the face must be covered.
 7. Strict personal hygienic practices are mandatory for each student including use of deodorant and toothpaste or mouthwash. Perfume, cologne, or scented lotions must not be worn.
 8. For purposes of maintaining a professional image, no heavy makeup is allowed while in uniform.
 9. Artificial eyelashes are not allowed.
 10. Judgments regarding appropriateness of uniform or student appearance will be at the discretion of the clinical faculty involved. Inappropriate uniform or student appearance may result in the student being sent home. This would be considered a clinical absence and the student would be required to make up the absence.
 11. Students may request an exception to the uniform policy. Written appeals should be made to the Assistant Director of Associate Degree Nursing who will present it to faculty for approval or disapproval
 12. Scrub caps may be worn if they are black, white, or blue and should not have any design.

B. Classroom Attire-On Campus

Exceptions to classroom uniform requirements can be found below. Additional exceptions to the policy are the need to bring a stethoscope, a watch with the ability to compute time in seconds, black pens, a penlight, and bandage scissors. However, these materials are required for the health assessment course. There will be instances where you will be required to bring additional items for classroom activities.

Uniform Exceptions for the Didactic Classroom	
Uniform and Shoes	Same as clinical requirement except for shoes which may be clean, non-slip shoes of any color.
Hair and Nails	Hair may be down in the classroom. Nail polish may be worn in the classroom.
Piercings and Eyelashes	Artificial eyelashes may be worn in the classroom if they do not interfere with vision. Additional piercings are allowed in the classroom but are expected to be professional in appearance.
Tattoos	Tattoos are the same as clinical requirements.
Professional appearance	Guided by faculty

C. Classroom Attire-Virtual

The clinical uniform is not required for the theory content presented via Zoom. The instructor may ask for students to wear their uniform for Zoom presentations but the students will be notified in advance. Uniforms will be required for all clinical experiences whether virtual or physically on campus unless otherwise specified.

III. Student Conduct - (Refer to Georgia Highlands College Student Handbook)

Georgia Highlands School of Health Sciences Code of Conduct:

Students enrolled in the Health Sciences Programs at Georgia Highlands College are expected to adhere to a professional standard of conduct and maintain a professional image in dress and demeanor. This conduct is expected in the classroom, virtual learning environment, community, and healthcare facilities. The Code of Conduct is based on policies and procedures that are supported by Georgia Highlands College and various clinical agencies and not limited to the following. Students will perform client care in a lawful, safe, and effective manner. Students will also maintain a respectful, sensitive, and compassionate relationship with faculty, classmates, and clients. Students are not only responsible for their actions within the classroom and clinical setting but they are also responsible for notifying the appropriate party if they are aware of any unprofessional conduct of fellow classmates. It is the student's

responsibility to report any impairment that he or she is experiencing or a classmate is experiencing that could put a client's safety at risk. Students documented to 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.

A breach in Code of Conduct will result in an informal or formal resolution method. The informal resolution method will be handled by the course lead in conjunction with the Assistant Director of Nursing who will make a recommendation to the Director of Nursing. The Director of Nursing will then meet with the student to discuss the resolution. If an informal resolution is not accepted, the situation will be referred via the college chain of command.

Unlike the appeals process for violation of the Academic Integrity code where a student is allowed to continue to attend class and clinical, a student in the appeals process for a violation of the Code of Conduct is not allowed to attend clinical in the clinical facilities.

A. Academic Integrity: (Refer to Georgia Highlands College Student Handbook and Academic Integrity Code)

The Nursing Program follows the Georgia Highlands College Academic Integrity Code. Reference the Georgia Highlands College Student handbook for details.

A breach in the Academic Integrity Code will result in an informal or formal resolution method. Informal or formal resolution will be entered into the Maxient system. The informal resolution method will be handled by the Course lead in conjunction with the Assistant Director of Nursing who will make a recommendation to the Director of Nursing. The Director of Nursing will then meet with the student to discuss the resolution. If an informal resolution is not accepted, the situation will be handled via the college chain of command.

B. Disruptive Behavior:

As stated in the GHC student handbook, students are expected to abide by the rules of common courtesy and respect the authority of all college employees. No student shall:

- display classroom behavior that interferes with the learning environment (virtual or physical.)
- challenge the authority of a course instructor that creates a threatening environment for other students or the instructor.

The student displaying disruptive behavior will be asked to leave the classroom. This will be counted as an absence. The disruptive conduct will be reported via the college chain of command.

C. Cell phones and electronic equipment:

All electronic equipment must be placed on vibrate or off during clinical, classroom, or campus and simulation labs. Electronic equipment must only be used for clinical or class related activities during clinical and classes. All facility guidelines concerning cell phones must be followed while in those facilities. **NO** cell phones or electronic equipment are allowed in testing rooms during tests.

D. Video and Audio recording:

No audio or video recording of lecture or campus lab content is allowed without the permission of the instructor. Written permission is required for video recording. Audio or video recordings are for student use only and should not be posted to a public platform. Posting faculty lectures without permission may result in dismissal from the program.

E. Confidentiality:

Confidentiality is required concerning client information including, but not limited to, written, printed, verbal, social media, or observed information. Breach of confidentiality or HIPAA violation will result in dismissal from the nursing program. A student with breach of confidentiality is not allowed to return to the nursing program.

F. Safe Practice:

Students must demonstrate behaviors that support safe practice. Failure to demonstrate these behaviors can result in sanctions and/or dismissal from the program as determined by the faculty.

G. Weapons:

The Nursing Department abides by the weapons policy for the college. Refer to Georgia Highlands College Student Handbook Campus Carry Policy for details.

H. Drug and Alcohol Policy: (Refer to the Georgia Highlands College Student Handbook)

- i. The faculty will dismiss a student from the classroom, lab or clinical facility if there is a suspicion of substance abuse.
- ii. The nursing faculty reserves the right to require, at the expense of the student, a drug test or other appropriate test if there is a suspicion of substance abuse.
- iii. Violation of the Drug and Alcohol Policy is grounds for dismissal from the nursing program.

I. Tobacco Use:

Georgia Highlands College has a tobacco-free campus policy. Refer to the Georgia Highlands College Student Handbook for details.

J. Student Injury in the Clinical Setting:

If a nursing student is in an assigned clinical area when the personal injury occurs, he/she is to report the event immediately to the clinical faculty member. According to agency policy, a report with specific details of the injury will be completed. It is recommended that the student report to the Emergency Department for evaluation and treatment. All medical care received by the student will be the student's sole responsibility and expense. If a student elects not to receive medical care, this should be stated in the report. The clinical faculty member will review the report and report the incident to the Assistant Director of Nursing.

K. Children on campus:

Due to the clinical/adult nature of the nursing program, children are not allowed in the classroom/clinical setting during instruction. The college requires that all children be attended by their parents while on campus and thus, children will not be allowed in the classroom, lab, or clinical setting.

IV. Attendance Policy

The faculty of Georgia Highlands College believes that nursing is both an art and a science. Although the science of nursing may be learned solely through reading texts, the art of nursing requires active participation with others in the profession. For this reason, nursing students should be prepared to attend and actively participate in every class, clinical and lab. Absences from class, clinical and lab are discouraged. Students must inform appropriate faculty member(s) and/or the Nursing Department Office if an absence will occur. This must be done prior to the time of the class, clinical or lab experience. Students dismissed from the program related to absences will receive an "F" for the course in which the absences occurred. An absence is defined differently for class, clinical and lab. A student dismissed for excessive absenteeism has the right to appeal to the Assistant Director of Nursing to remain in the program. If a satisfactory resolution is not achieved, the student may appeal to the Director of Nursing.

A. Class Absences

Class absences are defined based on delivery method for the course. The number of allowed absences is based on the number of theory hours for the courses. Classroom absences are based on sessions. A lecture time period is considered a session. Should a course meet in both the morning and afternoon, the AM lecture time period is considered one session and the PM lecture time is considered a different session.

Faculty members will distribute the attendance sign-in sheet at any point during a

session. The sign-in sheet must be signed by the student during the session. Signing the sign-in sheet for another student is considered an act of academic dishonesty. Students who exceed the number of allowed absences as defined below will be dismissed from the program and receive an “F” for the course in which the absences occurred.

Course	Delivery Method	Classroom	Online
NURS 1001	Hybrid	Miss no more than 2 sessions	
NURS 1002	Hybrid	Miss no more than 1 session	Must log in to D2L at least 2 times per week and show progression through the modules
NURS 1100	Hybrid	Miss no more than 4 sessions	
NURS 1200	Hybrid	Miss no more than 4 sessions	
NURS 1300	Hybrid	Miss no more than 1 day on campus	Must log in to D2L at least 2 times per week and show progression through the modules
NURS 1400	Hybrid	Miss no more than 1 day on campus	Must log in to D2L at least 2 times per week and show progression through the modules
NURS 2500	Hybrid	Miss no more than 4 sessions	
NURS 2600	Hybrid	Miss no more than 4 sessions	
NURS 2650	Hybrid	Miss no more than 1 session	

If a student has multiple classroom absences, related to the same incident and exceeding the maximum number of absences, these absences may be grouped as one classroom absence once an appeal is filed with the director of the program in writing and documentation of an excused reason is confirmed. Unexcused will not be considered.

Examples of excused reasons include:

- Absence due to the student’s own serious health condition or disease which causes the student to be unable to perform the functions of a nursing student
- The emergent care or death of a student’s immediate family member (spouse, child, parent, sibling or significant other living in the same household)
- The birth of a student’s child
- Deployment to active duty in the Armed Forces
- Jury Duty
- Documentation of the above is required for an absence to be considered excused.

B. Campus Lab Absences

Absences from scheduled campus lab experiences can jeopardize the student’s ability to meet course objectives. It is mandatory that the student notify the Campus Lab Coordinator if he/she will be unable to attend a scheduled campus lab experience. Failure to attend the assigned campus lab sessions without prior notification will be counted as No Show and as an absence from the clinical experience. This absence will count toward the total number of clinical absences for the course and must be

made up. Campus lab absences count in the total number of clinical absences allowed for the course in which the student is enrolled.

In order to complete campus laboratory course requirements, students must be checked off on required campus lab skills. The student must come to each skills verification appointment prepared to perform the required skills. Students will have two (2) chances to satisfactorily complete each skills verification. If a student does not pass the first attempt, he or she must schedule and practice the required skill prior to scheduling the second attempt. If a student does not pass the second attempt, he or she will fail to complete the campus laboratory course requirements. Failure to complete the campus laboratory course requirements will result in an "F" for the course.

If a student is absent from a skills verification appointment without a valid excuse, the absence will be counted as failed attempt at the skills verification. The student will only have the one remaining attempt to satisfactorily complete the skills verification.

C. Clinical Absences

- a. The clinical component of nursing courses consists of time in acute care settings, community settings, campus lab, and the simulation lab. Attendance for scheduled clinical experiences is mandatory to meet course objectives. All clinical absences must be made up for course completion. The maximum number of clinical absences that can be made up for a semester is two occurrences per course. If the student is absent from any clinical component a third time, the student will be dismissed from the course in which the absences occurred and receive an "F" for the course. Failure to come to clinical prepared, to include credentialing by the required deadline, for any clinical experience will result in the student being dismissed from the campus lab or clinical/simulation experience and will count as a clinical absence. This absence will count toward the total clinical absences for the course and must be made-up to progress.
- b. Priority for clinical makeup will be given to students with documented reasons for absence such as the students' serious health condition or disease, emergent care or death of a student's immediate family member, birth of a child, deployment or jury duty. Clinical makeup during the semester is not guaranteed and may be at the student's expense. No more than 25% of hospital-based clinical can be replaced with simulation experiences.
- c. It is mandatory that the student call the clinical instructor for that rotation and clinical liaison if he/she is unable to attend a scheduled clinical experience. Failure to contact the instructor or clinical liaison will be reflected in the clinical evaluation and may result in an unsatisfactory clinical grade. When a clinical is missed, the student must contact the clinical liaison and make up the day at the faculty's discretion. A make-up day counts as a scheduled clinical experience and a missed make-up day counts as a clinical absence.
 - i. The clinical faculty member has the right to excuse the student from clinical. The absence must be made up. The absence will be counted toward the maximum number of days a student can miss.

- ii. If the student fails to complete make-up days by the end of the semester, a grade of “Incomplete” will be assigned for the course. The student will not be able to progress in the nursing sequence until the “Incomplete” is cleared from his/her record. If a student fails to complete excused make-up days by the end of the scheduled clinical experiences for the course, the student will be responsible for any expenses incurred.
- iii. Failure to complete preparation work for a scheduled clinical experience can result in the student being dismissed from the clinical experience. A dismissal from a clinical experience for failure to complete preparation work will count as an unexcused clinical absence. This absence must be made up. Failure to come to a scheduled clinical experience prepared will be reflected in the clinical evaluation and may result in an “Unsatisfactory” clinical grade.
- iv. Tardiness for a scheduled clinical experience can jeopardize the student’s ability to meet the objectives of the clinical experience and/or the student’s ability to give safe nursing care for the day. Therefore, if a student is late, the clinical faculty member will decide if the student may proceed with the clinical experience. Repeated tardiness will be reflected in the clinical evaluation and may result in an “Unsatisfactory” clinical grade. If the student is sent home for tardiness, this absence will count toward the total absences for the course and must be made up.
- v. The skills competency checklist must be satisfactorily completed before progressing in the nursing course sequence. It is the student’s responsibility to make sure the faculty member for a clinical experience is notified of any mandatory skills that need to be completed. Re-entry students must restart all mandatory component of the checklist for that course.
- vi. The student must fulfill all written assignments within the time allotted by the clinical faculty member. Failure to meet this requirement will be reflected in the clinical evaluation tool and may result in an “Unsatisfactory” clinical grade.

V. Clinical Experiences/Facility Requirements

- A. A clinical evaluation tool is used to determine a grade for each rotation as well as for the course. The evaluations may be rated either “Satisfactory” (S), “Unsatisfactory” (U), or “Needs Improvement” (NI). Students may have a “Satisfactory”, “Unsatisfactory”, or “Needs Improvement” for any rotation within the semester. However, the student must have a “Satisfactory” (S) for the semester clinical grade in order to continue to the next semester. Students who earn an “Unsatisfactory” clinical grade for the semester cannot progress in the nursing sequence regardless of the theory grade, and will receive an “F” for the course. (See Guidelines for Use of the Clinical Evaluation Tool for definitions of Satisfactory and Unsatisfactory clinical performance)

- B. Simulation lab and virtual experiences are considered clinical hours. If a student misses a scheduled simulation lab or virtual experience, the absence must be made up. The absence will be counted toward the maximum number of days a student can miss. Missed scheduled make-up simulation lab experiences also count toward the maximum number of days a student can miss.
- C. Campus lab, Evidence-Based Practice (EBP) presentations, Interprofessional Education (IPE), and simulation are all considered clinical experiences. Any absence of these activities will count toward the maximum number of clinical days a student can miss.
- D. Failure to complete preparation work, to include credentialing by the required deadline, for a clinical or simulation experience can result in the student being dismissed from the clinical/simulation experience and will count as a clinical absence. This absence must be made-up.
- E. Compliance with all clinical facility requirements is mandatory. Students must be cleared by the clinical placement coordinator **2 weeks** prior to the clinical experience at the facility. If a student has to miss a clinical day because the requirements have not been completed, the missed day will be counted as a clinical absence. The facility can make additional requirements to participate in the clinical experience.
- F. Students should address any questions regarding clinical credentialing to the GHC nursing Program Coordinator and not the clinical facility. Reaching out to the clinical facility directly is unprofessional conduct and can be grounds for dismissal from the program.

VI. Pregnancy

- A. The student should notify the course lead as soon as pregnancy is confirmed. This will enable the course lead to alter assignments if necessary.
- B. The student must fill out a "Pregnancy Release Form" in the nursing office.

VII. Testing and Grading

A. Grading Scale:

The grading scale is based on a point system in each course and is described in each course syllabus. Test grades are posted in the learning management system (LMS). Course grades are posted in SCORE/BANNER. No grades are released by telephone.

B. Final Grades:

A nursing student must have a final grade of 'C' in a nursing course and achieve a 'Satisfactory' evaluation of clinical performance in order to advance to the next nursing course. An 'Unsatisfactory' evaluation of clinical performance results in an

'F' for the course and the student will not be allowed to continue attending class. 'Satisfactory' evaluation of clinical performance is specified in each course syllabus and the clinical evaluation tool.

C. Clinical Calculations Test:

'Pass-Fail' test on Clinical Calculations is given in each semester. The student must be able to correctly perform the calculations given on the Clinical Calculations test and achieve 9 out of 10 points. The student may use any form of calculations they feel confident in to arrive at their answer (ration/proportion, dimensional analysis, desired/on hand method, etc.). Students need to show their math on the answer sheet provided or the actual test as this helps if remediation is needed. The student will identify their final answer by placing the answer on the line provided or by circling the answer they prefer to be graded. Students should also take care to follow the rounding rules provided on the Clinical Calculations test.

Failure to achieve a minimum of 9 out of 10 points on the first test attempt will result in the remediation to prepare for retesting. The student will have two opportunities to pass the Clinical Calculations test each semester. Failure to correctly perform clinical calculations resulting in an incorrect medication dose will result in failure of the clinical calculations exam. If the student fails to earn 9 out of 10 points on the second attempt, the student will receive an "F" for the course and will not be allowed to continue in the nursing program.

D. Rounding Rules for Clinical Calculations Questions

Clinical calculations questions are included on nursing exams as well as on the "Pass-Fail" Clinical Calculations test each semester. A computer calculator will be used during the test period. The rounding rules for clinical calculations questions must followed in order to receive credit for answers on clinical calculations questions.

- I. If the answer is less than one (1), take the math out three (3) places past the decimal point (the thousandth position) and round to two (2) places past the decimal point (the hundredth position).
- II. If the answer is greater than one (1), take the math out two (2) places past the decimal point (the hundredth position) and round to one (1) place past the decimal point (the tenth position).
- III. Do not include trailing zeros. (Ex: 12.0ml would simply be expressed as 12ml)
- IV. Always use a leading zero for numbers less than one. (Ex: .25ml should be expressed as 0.25ml)
- V. For tablets, if students have a problem that works out to exactly 0.5 tablet, do not round the answer. If the answer works out to less than 0.5 tablet, round down to the next whole number. If the answer works out to greater than 0.5 tablet, round up to the next whole number.
- VI. Capsules are different. Capsules cannot be divided. Therefore, capsules have to be rounded to a whole number. Less than half a capsule rounds down to the next lowest whole number. A half capsule and greater rounds up to the next whole number.
- VII. Be careful not to round until the end of the problem. Rounding early in

the problem results in at least double rounding and will give an incorrect answer in the end. (Ex: if converting weight from pounds to kgs before working out the rest of the problem, leave the math expressed as three (3) places past the decimal point until after the rest of the problem is worked out)

- VIII. For IV fluids being administered by gravity (drops per min), the number of drops must be expressed as a whole number. Therefore, round to the nearest whole drop. (Ex: $34.5 = 35\text{gtts/min}$, $38.4 = 38\text{gtts/min}$)
 - IX. For IV fluids administered by an infusion pump (ml/hr), the number of ml to be infused each hour is expressed as a whole number. Therefore, round to the nearest whole ml. For IV fluids administered by an infusion pump in critical care settings, take the math out two (2) places past the decimal point and round to the first place past the decimal point (the tenths position).
 - X. When calculating how long it will take IV fluids to infuse, express the answer in hours and minutes. Be sure to take the math out three (3) places past the decimal point before converting the partial hour to minutes. (Ex: 4.462 hours where $0.462 \times 60 = 27.72 = 28\text{mins}$ for a final answer of 4hrs 28mins).
- E. Students must earn at least the minimum number of course exam points for a grade of 'C' as outlined in the course syllabus before additional course points are added to the final course grade. Each course syllabus provides information regarding all points and grades. Note: Poor performance on additional assignments can lower the final course grade without lowering total earned exam points. Failure to complete mandatory assignments by the last day of class may result in a failure of the course and the student cannot proceed to the next semester.
- F. Students are expected to complete all assignments within the time allotted. All course assignments must be satisfactorily completed to progress to the next nursing course. Details for each course assignment are located in the syllabus.

G. Behavior during testing

- I. Students are allowed to use their own laptops and writing utensil for testing or to test in computer classrooms.
- II. Ensure personal laptops are fully charged before coming in for a test. Bring power cords to class on exam dates. If students have less than 50% battery life and do not have access to a plug-in, students will need to test in the computer lab.
- III. Laptops, power cords, ear buds, and car keys are the only items students should bring into class. Everything else should remain locked in the car. No hoods, hats, water bottles, food, or wrist wear of any kind are allowed. If special considerations are needed, please see the proctor prior to the scheduled exam time. Refer to the syllabus for further instruction.
- IV. Arrive at least 30 minutes prior to scheduled exam time.
- V. If students are more than 15 minutes late for the scheduled exam time they will be given the opportunity to test utilizing the time remaining for

exam.

H. Exam Absences

1. Exam policies will establish standards in the GHC School of Nursing that result in fairness, integrity, and professionalism while considering the individual needs and equal opportunities for all students. All exams must be taken on the assigned date and time. No early, late or make up exams will be given except for the last exam with a valid and viable excuse.
2. If one exam is missed, the weight of the last exam of the course will be substituted for the missed exam. The 'weight' refers to the percentage of correct answers that correlates statistically and numerically to the number of questions on the missed exam. This percentage will be rounded to the lower number. For example, if a student misses test 2 (worth 67 points), and scores 80 points out of 90 points on the final, the weight for test 2 would be 88% or 59 points as the number of points rounds down. If the last exam of the course is missed for a viable and valid excuse, the Course Lead Instructor and Faculty will devise a make-up exam. The make-up exam may utilize an alternate format.
3. Absence from two exams will result in the student receiving a zero for the second missed exam. The student may either withdraw from the course if prior to the withdrawal date or the grades received may result in course failure. The student may apply for readmission the next academic year if eligible.
4. If the student must miss an exam, the student should call the Course Lead Instructor as soon as possible. Previously scheduled social/personal events and vacations/travel reservations are not viable or valid excuses for missing an exam. A valid excuse with documentation is required of the student missing an exam. These include:
 - The student's own serious health condition or disease which causes the student to be unable to perform the functions of a nursing student. Health Care Provider excuse is required.
 - The emergent care or demise of a student's immediate family member (spouse, child, parent, or significant other living in the same household). Health Care Provider or Funeral Announcement is required.
 - The birth of a student's child. Health Care Provider excuse is required.
 - A student who is deployed to active duty in the Armed Forces on the date the exam is scheduled. Official orders will serve as documentation.

I. Exam Absence Policy for Non-Progression Courses

1. Exam policies will establish standards in the GHC School of Nursing that result in fairness, integrity, and professionalism while considering the individual needs and equal opportunities for all students. All exams must be

taken on the assigned date and time. No early, late or make up exams will be given except with a valid and viable excuse.

2. If the student must miss an exam, the student should call the Course Lead Instructor as soon as possible. Previously scheduled social/personal events and vacations/travel reservations are not viable or valid excuses for missing an exam. A valid excuse with documentation is required of the student missing an exam. These include:
 - The student's own serious health condition or disease which causes the student to be unable to perform the functions of a nursing student. Health Care Provider excuse is required.
 - The emergent care or demise of a student's immediate family member (spouse, child, parent, or significant other living in the same household). Health Care Provider or Funeral Announcement is required.
 - The birth of a student's child. Health Care Provider excuse is required.
 - A student who is deployed to active duty in the Armed Forces on the date the exam is scheduled. Official orders will serve as documentation.

J. Release of Test Grades:

After each test is administered, an intensive review process is initiated by the faculty. For that reason, grades are not released for 48 hours. Under certain circumstances, and with prior notification to students, exceptions to this policy may be made by the faculty. Examples of such conditions include, but are not limited to, less than 48 hours until the midterm date to withdraw without penalty and less than 48 hours to a scheduled holiday. Every effort is made to complete the review in a timely manner. However, clinical and classroom commitments can delay the completion of the review process. Should the review process need to extend beyond 48 hours, students will be notified in the LMS by the Course lead.

K. Analysis of Test

The nursing faculty believes that it is beneficial to student learning to have a time that validates the student's learning and identifies gaps in learning. Students are encouraged to make an appointment with their faculty mentor/liaison to analyze the test. This review must occur once grades have been released and prior to the next test.

- Students should schedule appointments with their mentor for individual test review.
- If a student has not earned at least the minimum number of course exam points for a grade of 'B' as outlined in the course syllabus by midterm of the semester, a conference is encouraged with the faculty mentor. If a student has not earned at least the minimum number of course exam points for a grade of 'C' as outlined in the course syllabus, a conference is

- required with the faculty mentor.
- Personal items including, but not limited to, cell phones, are not permitted during test review.
- During test review, students will be provided the questions that were missed and the answer with rationales for review.
- No notes can be made during the test analysis.

VIII. Student Employment as Unlicensed Nursing Personnel

Unlicensed students shall be employed only as unlicensed nursing personnel. The students shall not represent themselves, or practice, as nursing students outside of school clinical experiences.

IX. Appeals Process/Grade Appeal Policy

The Nursing Program follows the grade appeal policy for the college. Refer to the Georgia Highlands College Student Handbook for details. The grade appeal process will start with the course lead. The student must contact his/her faculty mentor after the grade is issued to discuss the grade. This contact should occur no later than 5 business days from the issuance of the grade. If the faculty mentor is unable to resolve the issue to the student's satisfaction, the student should contact the Course lead.

X. Progression in the Nursing Program

- A nursing student must maintain a grade of C in a nursing course and achieve a satisfactory evaluation of clinical performance to advance to the next nursing course or graduate from the program.
- The traditional nursing sequence is defined as NURS 1000, NURS 1001, NURS 1002, NURS 1100, NURS 1200, NURS 2500, NURS 2600 and NURS 2650. NURS 1000, NURS 1001, and NURS 1002 are non-clinical courses within the sequence. NURS 1100, NURS 1200, NURS 2500, NURS 2600 and NURS 2650 are clinical courses within the sequence.
 - A student who makes a D, F, or W in any one non-clinical course may repeat that course one time only.
 - NURS 1000 must be completed prior to taking NURS 2500.
 - NURS 1001 must be taken concurrently with NURS 1200. NURS 1002 must be completed prior to taking NURS 2500. If unsuccessful on the second attempt, the student will not be able to progress in the program and may be considered for readmission into the nursing sequence.
 - A student who makes a D, F, or W in more than one non-clinical course cannot continue in the program and may be considered for readmission into the nursing sequence.
 - A student who makes an F, or W in a clinical course may not progress in the program and may be considered for readmission into the nursing sequence.

- LPN-RN and Paramedic-RN students only: The professional bridge sequence is defined as NURS 1300, NURS 1400, NURS 2500, NURS 2600 and NURS 2650. Unsatisfactory completion of NURS 1300 or NURS 1400 (D, F, or W) will prevent reentry into the professional bridge sequence.
 - A student who makes a D, F, or W in either NURS 1300 or NURS 1400 may request admission to the traditional nursing sequence beginning with NURS 1000, NURS 1001, NURS 1002 and NURS 1100.
 - A student who makes a D, F, or W in both NURS 1300 and NURS 1400 may apply for admission to the traditional nursing sequence.
 - A student who makes a D, F, or W in NURS 2500, NURS 2600 or NURS 2650 may be considered for readmission into the professional bridge sequence.
- The Georgia Highlands College Associate Degree Nursing program supports student success and recognizes that critical life events may occur that would hinder a student's ability to be successful in the program. For this reason, one hardship withdrawal as defined and approved by the Office of the Provost will not count as an attempt in the nursing program. Students are limited to one occurrence during their tenure in the program. Students may request readmission after receiving a hardship withdrawal.
- Incomplete grades in nursing courses must be completed prior to the student beginning the next course in the nursing sequence. If this is not done, the student will automatically receive an F.
- The student must meet all the requirements for graduation specified by the college and the nursing program.
- The student must maintain certification in American Heart Association Basic Life Support for Healthcare Professionals throughout the program. Heartsaver courses are not acceptable.
- Other requirements to register for second year nursing courses:
 - Annual medical updates including immunizations and titers
 - Annual criminal background check and drug screen
- The nursing faculty reserves the right to reconsider all stated nursing policies under unusual circumstances.

XI. Readmission into the Nursing Program

A student who is dismissed for making a D, F, or W in a nursing course at Georgia Highlands College may be eligible for readmission into the nursing program. The student must be able to complete all nursing courses within a five-year period to be an eligible applicant for readmission. This includes courses taken in which a grade of C or above was received.

Applicants seeking readmission will be considered on a space available basis with the following conditions:

1. A 2.5 or higher **cumulative** grade point average (including transfer courses).
2. Students seeking readmission into the program must inform the Director of Nursing in writing at least three months before the term in which they wish to re-enter. The letter should identify the reason(s) for failure to progress in the

nursing program, the reason(s) the applicant would like to be readmitted, and the circumstances that have changed to indicate successful completion of the program.

3. A student who has been dismissed from the college for any reason will not be considered for readmission into the nursing program.
4. All nursing courses must be completed within a five-year period.
5. The student may be required to retake the biology courses if the courses were taken more than six years prior to applying for readmission.
6. Approval of the Admissions Committee is required for readmission into the nursing sequence.

Class Representatives

Each class will elect a representative to attend nursing faculty meetings. The responsibilities include presentation of current events related to their class, represent the class in curriculum issues and report back to the class.

Highlands Association of Nursing Students (HANS)

All students enrolled in Nursing courses are encouraged to be members of HANS. Membership is also open to Pre-Nursing students. Offices available include President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, Breakthrough to Nursing Director, Legislative Director, Community Service Director and Public Relations Director. Officers may also include an Student Government Association Representative. These officers will be considered the Executive Board of HANS. Elections, excluding the position of President, are held in the Fall Semester. The election for the office of President is held in the Spring Semester. Pre-Nursing students may run for any office except the offices of President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer and Breakthrough to Nursing Director. First year Nursing students may run for any office except the office of President and Treasurer. Faculty Advisors to HANS will be assigned by the Director of Nursing. The Faculty Advisors will be available for HANS meetings, and serve as resource people and consultants.

The Executive Board will preside over the HANS meetings and be the official representatives for all business concerning HANS.

The duties of the **President** include:

1. Attend, or designate a member of the Executive Board to attend, all nursing faculty meetings representing HANS by giving a report of activities/needs/concerns
2. Preside over Executive Board meetings
3. Preside over HANS meetings with the Vice-President to inform the organization of pertinent information from the nursing faculty meeting, school functions, activities, ceremonies, and any other student functions or issues.
4. Interface with the faculty advisor(s)
5. Act as a mediator between the Director of Nursing and HANS members for problems/concerns
6. Appoint special committees as needed for HANS recognition/recruitment luncheon, Nursing Pinning Ceremony, Faculty Recognition Luncheon, etc.
7. Act as a resource person and consultant for any committees appointed
8. Attend, or designate a member of the Executive Board to attend, the Georgia Association of Nursing Students Council of School Presidents (COSP) meetings twice a year and report back to the Executive Board and HANS members
9. Attend, or designate a member of the Executive Board to attend, the Georgia Highlands College Student Engagement Council (SEC) meetings
10. Perform other duties as assigned by the Faculty.

The duties of the **Vice-President** include:

1. Assume the duties of the President in the absence or disability of the President
2. Accede to the office of President in case of a vacancy in the office
3. Be responsible for reviewing and recommending changes in the bylaws and policies

4. Coordinate class pictures
5. Help plan and coordinate the Nursing Pinning Ceremony
6. Work with the Alumni Association
7. Perform other duties as assigned by the President.

The duties of the **Treasurer** include:

1. Responsible for all HANS financial matters and financial records
2. Report on allocated funds and expenditures related to the budget at monthly HANS meetings
3. Coordinate financial aspects of the Nursing Pinning Ceremony, HANS Recognition/Recruitment Luncheon and Faculty Recognition Luncheon with the faculty advisor(s)
4. Perform other duties as assigned by the President.

The duties of the **Secretary** include:

1. Prepare the minutes of all business meetings of the association and of the Executive Board
2. Provide an up-to-date list of members and names/addresses of local and state officers
3. Inform all HANS members of association meetings through announcement postings two weeks in advance when time allows and notifies all Executive Board members by email of HANS and Executive Board meetings
4. Reserve and confirm HANS meeting and event locations
5. Prepare monthly minutes and provide to the Public Relations Director for inclusion in the student media outlet 10 days prior to each scheduled HANS meeting
6. Inform the NSNA and GANS of all current programs and activities and provide up-to-date names and addresses of district offices
7. Perform other duties as assigned by the President.

The duties of the **Breakthrough to Nursing Director** include:

1. Coordinate with the GANS Breakthrough to Nursing Director to implement the statewide BTN project
2. Act as a liaison with the Office of Student Affairs for recruitment purposes
3. Act as a liaison between pre-nursing students at Georgia Highlands College and other affiliated schools
4. Inform nursing and pre-nursing students of state and national financial aid resources
5. Coordinate Junior/Senior Mentor Program
6. Assist with statewide efforts to develop recruitment materials and guidelines.
7. Assist in recruitment efforts in the area
8. Responsible for HANS membership recruitment and retention
9. Perform other duties as assigned by the President.

The duties of the **Legislative Director** include:

1. Stay informed concerning legislation in Georgia affecting nurses and nursing students
2. Keep Executive Board and HANS members informed concerning nursing legislation in the state and union

3. Be responsible for maintaining HANS bylaws
4. Submit chapter resolutions to the House of Delegates at the annual convention
5. Inform students of roles and responsibilities of HANS officers, recruit qualified candidates for those positions, and obtain and distribute applications
6. Prepare the slate of candidates, monitor campaigning and elections, and conduct elections
7. Perform other duties as assigned by the President.

The duties of the **Community Service Director** include:

1. Act as a liaison between the students at Georgia Highlands College and the community as it relates to service events
2. Stay informed of HANS community service projects and encourage student participation
3. Work to develop or participate in local, statewide, national, international community service projects
4. Keep Executive Board and HANS members informed of volunteer service opportunities
5. Provide pertinent information regarding HANS activities to appropriate agencies including at least one article to the Six Mile Post related to community service events
6. Perform other duties as assigned by the President.

The duties of the **Public Relations Director** include:

1. Coordinate the Fall and Spring Career Fairs soliciting and communicating with potential exhibitors and advertisers
2. Write articles for the Six Mile Post on Georgia Highlands College nursing student activities
3. Write cards/notes to fellow students and others at times of personal crises/events on behalf of the class
4. Take and compile pictures of all HANS events for submission to student publications/media
5. Perform other duties as assigned by the President.

The duties of the **Student Government Association (SGA) Representative** include:

1. Act as a liaison between HANS and Georgia Highlands College
2. Attend all SGA meetings
3. Serve on any special committees deemed necessary by the Executive Board
4. Vote on issues on behalf of the nursing undergraduate student population
5. Relay important student government information to the HANS board
5. Perform all duties assigned by the President.

Studying for Nursing Examinations

A successful career in nursing requires careful preparation and personal commitment. During class time, you will be provided with a significant amount of technical information. Being prepared for class will be of great assistance to your success.

Although students entering the nursing program have been successful in their other college

classes, they often find the nursing examinations challenging and different from other tests they are used to taking. The nursing examinations are patterned after the NCLEX-RN examination that is the licensure exam. These questions are application and analysis level questions where students are required to have a knowledge base regarding the material and to apply that knowledge to a simulated situation.

Students find that it is often helpful to have strategy for preparing for class and for nursing exams. The strategy includes being prepared for class in advance for example;

1. Read the sections in the textbooks that pertain to the upcoming class (or skim the material in order to familiar with what will be presented in class)
2. Create your own outline from your reading
3. Make a list of questions for which you need additional clarification

Additional strategies that have helped students prepare for these examinations include, reviewing the class objectives, getting a good night's sleep, and forming study groups. Please do not rely only on the in class power points rarely to completely prepare you to apply your knowledge on exams.

Each nursing student will have a nursing faculty member as a mentor. An appointment should be made to meet with your mentor if you are having difficulty with the nursing exams. Additionally nursing students who are not successful on any exam will be referred for tutoring services.