



**Vocational Nurse Program  
Student Handbook**

**September 2020**

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## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

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### **Introduction**

This Handbook, along with the College catalog, provide students in the Vocational Nurse program with essential information including Nursing Department policies and expectations, as well as academic requirements and students' rights and responsibilities.

The information contained in this handbook is subject to revision that may redefine expectations and requirements. Students will be notified of changes through classroom announcements, email, campus communications boards, and on the College website.

### **Accreditation and Approvals**

Vista College is nationally accredited by the Commission of the Council on Occupational Education (COE) to award certificates, diplomas and associate degrees. Vista College is licensed and approved to offer the Vocational Nurse program by the following state agencies:

Texas Board of Nursing  
Texas Workforce Commission

### **Mission and Objectives**

The mission of Vista College and Computer Career Center, a division of Vista College, is to provide high quality, specialized career preparation or enhancement. Vista College and Computer Career Center, a division of Vista College, recognize this is an era of accelerated changes and accepts the responsibility to aid its students in preparation for these changes by providing quality education and career guidance relative to the demands of an evolving work place. Consistent with its mission, the following objectives were established:

- To enroll students who demonstrate the aptitude and attitude to successfully pursue programs offered.
- To provide programs designed to help students to meet the needs of allied health, business and trade vocations.
- To acquire and maintain data from graduates, employers, publications, and professional conferences which is organized and shared with faculty, staff and advisory board members to ensure that courses and program content are relevant and timely.
- To collaborate with community employers to develop and revise curricula that include competency-based vocational skills training and traditional occupational classroom experiences for students.
- To assist displaced workers with training of new and marketable skills.
- To be an active and contributing member of the community.
- To assist graduates in securing training-related careers.
- To maintain an environment of professional, positive integrity that serves as a role model for enrolled students.

### **Nursing Department Mission Statement**

The mission of the Nursing Department is to prepare competent nurses to provide safe, evidence-based, patient-centered care in diverse, healthcare environments. The educational process facilitates clinical judgement, professionalism, and interdisciplinary collaboration.

### **Student Involvement in Department Governance**

Student feedback is essential to improve the curriculum and instruction offered at Vista College. Evaluations are taken seriously by the faculty and administration and are valuable in enhancing students' learning opportunities, improving courses, and guiding faculty development. Each semester students are given the

opportunity to provide anonymous feedback on program elements including course content, course instructors, and clinical experiences.

Additional opportunities for student input include:

- Participation in nursing committees;
- Submissions to the student comment box;
- Posting on the campus communication board located in the Nursing Department; and
- Participation in evaluative activities such as surveys of agencies and resources; graduate exit surveys; and ad hoc focus groups.

### **American Nurses Association Code of Ethics**

Nursing students must adhere to the Code of Ethics for Nurses (American Nurses Association, *Code of Ethics for Nurses with Interpretive Statements*, 2015) as follows:

- The nurse practices with compassion and respect for the inherent dignity, worth, and unique attributes of every person.
- The nurse's primary commitment is to the patient, whether an individual, family, group, community, or population.
- The nurse promotes, advocates for, and protects the rights, health, and safety of the patient.
- The nurse has authority, accountability, and responsibility for nursing practice; makes decisions; and takes action consistent with the obligation to promote health and to provide optimal care.
- The nurse owes the same duties to self as to others, including the responsibility to promote health and safety, preserve wholeness of character and integrity, maintain competence, and continue personal and professional growth.
- The nurse, through individual and collective effort, establishes, maintains, and improves the ethical environment of the work setting and conditions of employment that are conducive to safe, quality health care.
- The nurse, in all roles and settings, advances the profession through research and scholarly inquiry, professional standards and development, and the generation of both nursing and health policy.
- The nurse collaborates with other health professionals and the public to protect human rights, promote health diplomacy, and reduce health disparities.
- The profession of nursing, collectively through its professional organizations, must articulate nursing values, maintain the integrity of the profession, and integrate principles of social justice into nursing and health policy.

### **Professional Organizations**

Professional associations set standards for, and work on behalf of, the practitioner in a number of ways including advocacy, lobby activities, continuing education, information, consultation, publications, grants, loans, and scholarships and the opportunity for professional growth and recognition.

Students are encouraged to join, at student rates, organizations that represent and support the profession. Membership allows the student to vote on matters of importance to the profession, and to access networking opportunities. Through membership, they become acquainted with student members from other schools, as well as practicing nurses, enhancing the student's professional development.

### **Texas Board of Nursing – Background Check**

The Texas Board of Nursing (TBON) has regulatory authority to make decisions about eligibility for initial licensure for students who have a criminal background. All students must have clearance by the TBON prior to participating in clinical experiences.

TBON guidelines for the licensure of individuals with criminal history are available at [https://www.bon.texas.gov/pdfs/law\\_rules\\_pdfs/rules\\_regulations\\_pdfs/bon\\_rr\\_Oct2016.pdf](https://www.bon.texas.gov/pdfs/law_rules_pdfs/rules_regulations_pdfs/bon_rr_Oct2016.pdf) and include restrictions or guidelines used to determine clearance and eligibility for a nursing license. Students with a criminal background may petition the board using a Declaratory Order to determine eligibility for licensure.

It is the student's responsibility to provide documentation of TBON criminal background clearance (blue card or letter from the Board) to the Nursing Program Director or designee no later than Week 12 of the first semester. Students who do not receive clearance from the TBON will not be allowed to participate in clinical experiences and therefore will not be registered for any courses in the second semester.

## PROGRAM

### Vocational Nurse (VN) Outcomes

Vocational Nurse (VN) graduates are eligible to take the National Council Licensure Examination for Practical Nurses (NCLEX-PN) and are prepared to enter vocational nursing practice in a variety of health care settings. VN graduates will be prepared to exercise sound clinical judgment to improve the health of individuals, families, and communities in complex and culturally diverse environments.

Student Learning Outcomes (SLO) are derived from the departmental mission and professional standards of practice. The graduate of the VN program will be able to:

- Demonstrate clinical judgement and reasoning as outcomes of critical thinking and a clinical problem-solving process when providing safe nursing care in diverse healthcare environments;
- Collaborate with patients and the interprofessional healthcare team to coordinate and implement patient-centered care;
- Apply healthcare technology, current evidence, and quality improvement in nursing practice; and
- Integrate legal, ethical, and professional standards into the established scope of nursing practice.

### Curriculum Plan, Days

Course Number	Course Name	Total Quarter Credits/ Contact Hours	Didactic Quarter Credits/ Contact Hours*	Lab Quarter Credits/ Contact Hours**	Clinical Quarter Credits/ Contact Hours***
<b>Level I</b>					
VN120	Introduction to Vocational Nursing	4.5/45	4.5/45	0/0	0/0
VN124	Anatomy and Physiology	4.5/45	4.5/45	0/0	0/0
VN128	Health Assessment	4.5/75	1.5/15	3/60	0/0
VN130	Nursing Terminology and Mathematics	3/30	3/30	0/0	0/0
<b>Totals</b>		<b>16.5/195</b>	<b>13.5/135</b>	<b>3/60</b>	<b>0/0</b>

<b>Level II</b>					
VN148	The Older Adult	3/30	3/30	0/0	0/0
VN160	Pathophysiology	3/30	3/30	0/0	0/0
VN164	Medical Surgical Nursing	12/240	4.5/45	3/60	4.5/135
VN168	Pharmacology I	3/30	3/30	0/0	0/0
<b>Totals</b>		<b>21/330</b>	<b>13.5/135</b>	<b>3/60</b>	<b>4.5/135</b>

Level III					
VN220	Mental Health Nursing	4.5/75	3/30	0/0	1.5/45
VN224	Advanced Medical Surgical Nursing	10.5/210	4.5/45	1.5/30	4.5/135
VN228	Pharmacology II	3/30	3/30	0/0	0/0
<b>Totals</b>		<b>18/315</b>	<b>10.5/105</b>	<b>1.5/30</b>	<b>6/180</b>

Level IV					
VN240	Parent Child Nursing	6/90	4.5/45	0/0	1.5/45
VN244	Vocational Nursing Capstone	12/255	4.5/45	1.5/30	6/180
<b>Totals</b>		<b>18/345</b>	<b>9/90</b>	<b>1.5/30</b>	<b>7.5/225</b>
<b>GRAND TOTALS</b>		<b>73.5/1185</b>	<b>46.5/465</b>	<b>9/180</b>	<b>18/540</b>

\*10 Classroom Contact hours = 1 Quarter credit

\*\*20 Lab Contact hours = 1 Quarter credit

\*\*\*30 Clinical Contact hours = 1 Quarter credit

### Curriculum Plan, Evenings

Course Number	Course Name	Total Quarter Credits/ Contact Hours	Didactic Quarter Credits/ Contact Hours*	Lab Quarter Credits/ Contact Hours**	Clinical Quarter Credits/ Contact Hours***
Level I					
VN120	Introduction to Vocational Nursing	4.5/45	4.5/45	0/0	0/0
VN124	Anatomy and Physiology	4.5/45	4.5/45	0/0	0/0
VN128	Health Assessment	4.5/75	1.5/15	3/60	0/0
VN130	Nursing Terminology and Mathematics	1.5/15	1.5/15	0/0	0/0
<b>Totals</b>		<b>16.5/195</b>	<b>13.5/135</b>	<b>3/60</b>	<b>0/0</b>

Level II					
VN160	Pathophysiology	3/30	3/30	0/0	0/0
VN164	Medical Surgical Nursing	12/240	4.5/45	3/60	4.5/135
VN168	Pharmacology I	3/30	3/30	0/0	0/0
<b>Totals</b>		<b>18/300</b>	<b>10.5/105</b>	<b>3/60</b>	<b>4.5/135</b>

Level III					
VN148	The Older Adult	3/30	3/30	0/0	0/0
VN220	Mental Health Nursing	4.5/75	3/30	0/0	1.5/45
VN240	Parent Child Nursing	6/90	4.5/45	0/0	1.5/45
<b>Totals</b>		<b>13.5/195</b>	<b>10.5/105</b>	<b>0/0</b>	<b>3/90</b>

Level IV					
VN224	Advanced Medical Surgical Nursing	10.5/210	4.5/45	1.5/30	4.5/135
VN228	Pharmacology II	3/30	3/30	0/0	0/0
<b>Totals</b>		<b>13.5/240</b>	<b>7.5/75</b>	<b>1.5/30</b>	<b>4.5/135</b>

Level V					
VN244	Vocational Nursing Capstone	12/255	4.5/45	1.5/30	6/180
<b>Totals</b>		<b>12/255</b>	<b>4.5/45</b>	<b>1.5/30</b>	<b>6/180</b>
<b>GRAND TOTALS</b>		<b>73.5/1185</b>	<b>46.5/465</b>	<b>9/180</b>	<b>18/540</b>

\*10 Classroom Contact hours = 1 Quarter credit

\*\*20 Lab Contact hours = 1 Quarter credit

\*\*\*30 Clinical Contact hours = 1 Quarter credit

### **Learning Experience**

On-campus instructional methods include a variety of delivery formats such as: lectures, slide presentations, simulation scenarios, demonstration and return demonstration, role playing, interactive online instruction, and critical- thinking activities. Students will participate in both individual and cooperative learning activities in the classroom, clinical lab environments, and patient care environments. Computer labs, skills lab equipment, simulation manikins, and other equipment provide the technological support for various teaching methodologies.

### **Laboratory/Skill Competency**

In the laboratory, nursing instructors explain, clarify, and demonstrate nursing procedures. Students practice these procedures in a supportive learning environment to further develop their skills and understanding of nursing care procedures. Students complete assigned readings and learning activities **prior** to lab in order to be able to take full advantage of in-lab time by discussing assigned material and practicing and demonstrating skills.

Students work with each other in a respectful and professional manner, participate in clean-up, and are responsible for the equipment and materials in terms of safety, maintenance, and care. Students may use only the equipment related to skills that have been taught in the classroom and lab. No eating or drinking is permitted in the lab.

Once students are assessed and successfully demonstrate competency in designated nursing procedures in the lab setting, they will then be allowed to perform these skills in the clinical setting. All skills will be learned first, and then practiced in the lab during the course. Faculty will perform ongoing evaluations of clinical skills competency in all clinical/laboratory courses. Students who fail to perform a skill successfully will be provided with remediation, followed by a second evaluation of the skill by a different instructor. If a student fails to successfully perform any skill after two attempts, the student will fail the course.

Skills competency retention throughout the program is critical to overall program success. Students will be able to demonstrate competency in already-learned skills throughout the program, and will be evaluated on previously-learned skills (from earlier courses) during subsequent courses. Students who are unable to successfully perform a previously-learned skill will be required to engage in remediation outside of scheduled class hours until competent to perform.

### **Clinical Learning Experience**

Students are assigned randomly to off-campus clinical groups, preceptor assignments and clinical sites that will best facilitate each student's learning opportunities. Clinical hours vary and may include evenings, nights, weekends, and 10- to 12-hour shifts. Students may be required to travel up to three (3) hours each way to the clinical site. The student is responsible for transportation to all experiences, and any parking fees. If a student does not drive, in order to be present on time, he or she must make arrangements such as carpooling with other students or using public transportation.

Clinical experiences are based on contractual agreements between Vista College and each clinical facility. During the clinical rotation, students are required to know and adhere to all College **and** all site policies and procedures. Agency staff, patients, and family members have the right to refuse care provided by nursing students. Faculty reserve the right to change a student's daily patient/unit assignments to provide optimal learning experiences.

Students **must** arrive at clinical settings on time, professionally attired according to the College dress code, with appropriate equipment including a watch with second hand, his/her equipment kit, and a Vista College

picture Student ID. Students who do not meet these standards may be allowed to participate in the clinical experience but are in violation of the Student Conduct policy and must subsequently meet with the Nursing Program Director. Subsequent violations of the Student Conduct policy may result in dismissal from a clinical experience or dismissal from the program. Missed clinical experiences due to violations of the Student Conduct policy are subject to the Attendance policy.

Students will provide care to a diverse group of patients, provide comprehensive reports on patient status to the instructor and/or designated agency personnel, and participate actively in clinical conferences. It is mandatory that students maintain health information confidentiality and adhere to patient privacy regulations.

Students will remain on their assigned unit in the clinical setting for the entire shift unless otherwise reassigned by the instructor or preceptor. Students wishing to leave the unit for a break, must obtain permission before doing so. Students will be assigned a meal break time, and will return at the time identified by the instructor or preceptor. Students who return late will be subject to the attendance policy.

Students will be supervised and assessed during all procedures, will receive daily feedback about clinical performance, and will receive a final evaluation at the end of the clinical rotation. At any point during the clinical course, any student whose performance could result in a clinical failure will be scheduled to meet at the campus with the clinical instructor and Nursing Program Director to identify deficiencies and actions necessary for improvement.

### **Safe Practice**

Patient and staff safety is of primary importance in the clinical setting. Students **will not**:

- Perform procedures or administer medications without prior approval of the clinical instructor
- Care for patients without the clinical instructor or a staff nurse in attendance
- Accompany a patient to another care area without obtaining prior approval from the clinical instructor or preceptor
- Take verbal or telephone orders
- Witness consents for procedures or other legal documentation
- Carry medication or narcotic keys
- Use cellular phones or personal electronic devices for any activities other than those directly related to the educational experience

Unsafe practice is any situation during which a student's contact with a patient places the patient, student, staff, healthcare facility, and/or college at risk. Examples of unsafe practice include, but are not limited to: *lack of preparation, breach of confidentiality, failure to report significant assessment findings or changes in patient status, leaving a patient unattended, undertaking tasks with insufficient supervision or permission, incorrect practice, or leaving the unit without permission.* If the student's performance is potentially unsafe, a student may be asked to leave the clinical setting, may receive a clinical failure, or may be dismissed from the program.

The *Code of Ethics for Nurses with Interpretive Statements* communicates a standard of professional behavior expected throughout the nursing program. The College reserves the right to dismiss a student for unprofessional, unethical, dishonest, or illegal conduct that is inconsistent with the Code of Ethics.

### **Medication Administration / Errors**

Students may be allowed to administer medications in the clinical setting based on prior successful demonstration of competence in drug calculation and administration. Once assessed competent, with the approval of the instructor, and directly supervised by the instructor or a nurse, the student may administer:



- Oral, rectal, topical, subcutaneous, intradermal, and intramuscular medications
- Already-mixed continuous, primary intravenous solutions
- Secondary intravenous medications

A medication error or potential error is defined as any situation in which the correct procedure for medication administration is not followed. If an error occurs, the patient's safety is of utmost importance. Students must report immediately a medication error to the clinical instructor, as well as the unit nurse manager or charge nurse.

### **COVID-19 Restrictions for laboratory and clinical experiences**

Students must follow Vista College policies related to COVID-19 screening and personal protective equipment at both campus and clinical settings. Students are expected to arrive on time to all learning experiences, and will be held accountable for all clinical and laboratory policies outlined in the Student Nursing Handbook.

Students may not participate in campus and clinical experiences if they test positive, experience symptoms of COVID-19, or are quarantined due to exposure to COVID-19. Makeup experiences for missed content and evaluations may be scheduled at the joint discretion of the Nursing Program Director and Director of Education upon review of documentation of a COVID-19 infection or mandatory quarantine. If approved, makeup experiences must be completed when scheduled and may include weekday, evening and weekend experiences. Students who are unable to complete approved makeup experiences and meet all competencies by the end of the term will earn a failing grade for the course.

All course objectives, including clinical and laboratory competencies, must be met by the last day of the term. Students who choose not to participate in learning experiences may be withdrawn from a course or dismissed from the program based on other student policies.

### **ACADEMIC POLICIES**

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- The College reserves the right to modify policies, course schedules, curricula or courses due to exigent circumstances, program upgrades, and/or content changes
- Students who experience interruptions in established academic progression may delay the date of graduation
- Course credits earned at the College may not be transferable to other schools
- The College reserves the right to cancel programs of study, modes of delivery, or individual courses as it deems necessary, with notice to the students
- At the discretion of the College, programs and individual courses are subject to change for reasons that include, but are not limited to, curriculum revisions, changes in course and/or program enrollment, instructor availability, facility and/or space availability, or such other action as the College may deem appropriate or necessary

### **Attendance**

Attendance and punctuality are indicators of professional accountability and are essential for student learning and continued eligibility to receive Federal Financial Aid. Students are expected to attend every class, laboratory and clinical experience, arriving on time prepared to work.

Course instructors will take attendance and records are maintained to comply with institutional requirements. At the start of each course the student will receive a course syllabus containing a class schedule for the semester, attendance requirements, and all required activities including exams.

Students are expected to return on time from scheduled class breaks and to remain in class until dismissed by the instructor. When a student arrives late for class, laboratory or clinical, returns from a scheduled break

late, or leaves early, it is counted as missed time. Such missed time is recorded in 15 minute increments to determine the total time missed.

With the exception of Health Assessment, students who are absent 10% of the total hours for any classroom or laboratory course element will receive a Written Warning. Students who are absent more than 15% of the total hours for any classroom or laboratory course element will be withdrawn from the course. Combined classroom and laboratory course hours for Health Assessment will be used to calculate the 10% Written Warning and 15% withdrawal attendance policy.

All clinical experiences are scheduled and provided to students on a course schedule. Clinical experiences include direct and indirect patient care activities as well as pre- and post-conference activities. Missed clinical experiences are missed opportunities to meet course objectives. Students who arrive more than 15 minutes late to clinical experiences will be sent home and marked absent for the entire clinical day. Students who leave early from a clinical experience are considered absent from the entire experience. Students who miss more than two (2) clinical experiences in Medical Surgical Nursing, Advanced Medical Surgical Nursing or Practical Nursing Capstone will be withdrawn from the course. Students who miss more than one (1) clinical experience in Mental Health Nursing or Parent Child Health will be withdrawn from the course.

Violations of the Attendance Policy are not eligible for appeal.

### Grading System

The following grading scale applies to all courses in the Vocational Nursing Degree Program. Students must earn a grade of “C” or better in order to pass a course, otherwise, the course must be repeated. Two “F” course grades during the program (even if the course is repeated and passed) will result in dismissal from the program. Please refer to the College Catalog for comprehensive information on grades.

### Grading Scale

Letter Code	Description	Included in Credits Attempted	Included in Credits Earned	Included in CGPA	Grade Point Value
A	Excellent (90-100)	Yes	Yes	Yes	4.0
B	Above Average (80-89)	Yes	Yes	Yes	3.0
C	Average (75-79)	Yes	Yes	Yes	2.0
F	Failing (Below 75)	Yes	No	Yes	0.0
W	Withdrawn	No	Yes	No	NA
T	Transfer Credit	Yes	Yes	No	NA
PE	Proficiency Exam	Yes	Yes	No	NA
WM	Withdrawn Military	No	No	No	NA
WX	Withdrawn prior to Add/Drop Period	No	No	No	NA

Students may transfer course credit from other post-secondary public or private institutions accredited by an agency recognized by the US Department of Education for up to 75% of their program. See the College Catalog for the complete Credit Transfer policy.

### Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP)

All students are expected to maintain satisfactory academic progress toward successful completion of their program of enrollment. Please refer to the College Catalog for a comprehensive description of the Satisfactory Academic Progress policy.

## **Student Assessments**

All Nursing Department examinations, quizzes, and assessments are proctored and timed. Classroom exams and quizzes are multiple-choice, multiple response and approved alternative format questions. Standardized examinations may be used and will be computer-based.

All examinations must be taken on the day scheduled. When a student is late for an examination, he/she will be permitted to take the exam in the time remaining – no additional time will be provided. A student who wishes to make up a missed exam must submit documentation supporting his/her absence to the Nursing Program Director within 72 hours of the missed exam. Based on extenuating circumstances, makeup exams may be scheduled at the discretion of the Nursing Program Director upon review of documentation of the student's reason for missing the test, and in collaboration with the course instructor. If approved, the makeup exam must be completed within 7 consecutive calendar days of the missed exam.

All quizzes must be taken on the day scheduled. When a student is late for a quiz, he/she will be permitted to take the quiz in the time remaining. There are no make-up quizzes.

Unit exams, final exams and quizzes may be proctored using remote monitoring systems. Students are required to have a computer with a camera as well as adequate internet access to complete each assessment. Students who do not have required hardware or internet access, must contact the Nursing Program Director in advance to arrange for testing on campus or the borrowing of equipment. Students who experience internet or technical issues during an assessment must contact the instructor immediately. Communications between the student and the instructor should be submitted as documentation to support requests to make up examinations.

During testing, students will:

- Refrain from talking
- Leave all personal belongings, including all electronic devices, in a location identified by the instructor
- Place nothing on the desk; scratch paper, pencil and calculator will be provided by the instructor
- Begin the test at the same time
- Maintain academic integrity - any activity related to recording or sharing of content on written, practicum, or computer exams will be considered academic dishonesty
- Not bring or use resources not provided by the instructor
- Direct all questions to the test proctor

Students suspected of dishonesty will be removed from class without completing the exam and will be reported to the Nursing Program Director or designee.

## **Medication Calculation Competency**

Medication calculation competency exams assess all nursing students' abilities to calculate medication dosages and to apply the concepts that underlie dosage calculation. Medication calculation exams will be given in Pharmacology I, Pharmacology II and Vocational Nursing Capstone courses. Each test will assess previously-acquired knowledge and will be a timed, level-appropriate exam. A math calculation review will be provided during class prior to administration of the first exam, and basic four-function, non-programming calculators will be provided during testing. Students are required to achieve a score of 100% on one of the three exams.

Students who do not achieve a score of 100% on the first or second exam will be provided with a review and remediation prior to taking the next exam. Students who fail to achieve the minimum required 100% score

on at least one medication calculation exam will receive a failing grade for the course and must repeat the course. Failing grades in two or more nursing courses will result in dismissal from the nursing program.

### **Achievement Awards**

The Nursing Department may award graduates who have demonstrated significant achievement and excellence. Full time faculty will determine which awards to include at each pinning ceremony and will nominate award candidates who will be voted on by all members of the Nursing Department.

- **Nursing Excellence Award**  
This award will be presented to the graduating senior(s) who faculty determines has/have demonstrated excellence in academic achievement, as evidenced by the cumulative GPA in all nursing courses.
- **Clinical Excellence Award**  
This Award will be presented to a graduating senior(s) who faculty determines has/have demonstrated a high degree of expertise in critical thinking, assessment skills, and nursing interventions while on clinical rotation.
- **Service Excellence Award**  
This award will be presented to a graduating senior(s) in recognition of outstanding performance and commitment to pre-professional, community activities, and/or unique learning experiences which enhance the educational process. The recipient must has/have attained at least a 3.0 or greater total GPA. Students eligible for the Award will be notified by the Nursing Program Director and asked to submit substantiating evidence of their involvement in professional, community, and/or other activities. Students may nominate a peer for this award, or may self-nominate.
- **Nursing Leadership Award**  
This award will be presented to the graduating senior(s) who most clearly demonstrate(s) outstanding leadership ability. Such demonstration includes, but is not limited to, class, college, and community activities.
- **Perseverance Award**  
This award will be presented to a graduating senior(s) who has demonstrated exceptional initiative and shown perseverance in overcoming one or more significant obstacles. The award recipient(s) will have overcome adversity to prevail in achieving the goal of completing the nursing program.
- **Peer Recognition Award**  
Students will be asked to nominate a peer who exhibits excellence in scholarship, leadership, personality, and character.
- **Honor List**  
Each semester students whose cumulative GPA places them in the top 5% of the class will be honored.

### **ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES**

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#### **Electronic Devices**

When students are in classroom, laboratory or clinical settings, cellular telephones and all other personal electronic devices may not be used unless otherwise directed by the instructor. Phone calls, text messaging and emailing are not permitted during learning experiences.

It is a courtesy for students to request permission of individual faculty before taping lectures or demonstrations. For test security reasons, students may not tape test review sessions.

### Student Participation in Outside Service Projects While in Uniform

Nursing students sometimes are asked to participate in health fairs, screening programs, and other public or private activities. Students considering participation must request approval from the Nursing Program Director.

### Student Communication

A Communication Board is maintained within the Nursing Department where relevant information and notices are posted. Students are responsible for checking the boards whenever they are on campus to be aware of information pertinent to the nursing program. Information may also be provided through syllabus addendums, handbook revisions, e-mail, letters, certified letters, handouts, and class communication. The Vista College website is another important source of information.

Student-Instructor communications should occur in person when possible. Each instructor's office hours are posted on the course syllabus, and tutoring hours are posted on communication boards and Canvas pages. Asynchronous (not occurring at same time) communications may occur via email, voicemail, and messaging via Canvas and short message service (texting). Instructors will publish preferred methods for communicating on each syllabus. Instructors must respond to asynchronous communications within 3 days.

### Student Dress Code

- Students must be in uniform with appropriate personal protective equipment (masks) at all times while on campus or in clinical settings.
- Students must wear a watch with a second hand and bring the equipment kit to all laboratory and clinical experiences.
- Vista College identification must be worn on the uniform at all times, clipped or pinned at lapel level.
- Students who require adaptations to the required uniform for cultural and/or religious reasons, allergies, or for pregnancy, will consult with Nursing Program Director prior to the first day of class, or when the pregnancy impedes wearing the regular uniform.
- Alternative uniforms may be allowed during campus-sponsored events with approval from the Campus Director, Director of Education, and/or Nursing Program Director.
- Additional dress code requirements may be applied based on expectations of individual clinical sites.
- Students may not chew gum in clinical and laboratory settings.

### Dress Code

ALLOWED	NOT ALLOWED
<b>Uniforms</b>	
Issued by the College	Non College-issued scrubs
Neat and clean	Wrinkled, dirty, torn
Jacket issued by the College	Hoodies, sweaters, sweatshirts, other jackets
Plain long sleeve white or black t-shirt under top	Other color t-shirts, short sleeve, embellished
Pants no longer than the top of the shoe	Extra-long or sagging pants
White or Black, non-porous, closed toe, non-slip, and heel shoes	Shoes with logos, color or porous material; Clogs
Black or brown unadorned headband, 1" or narrower	Head coverings such as hats, caps, or bandanas
<b>Personal Adornments</b>	
Jewelry – wedding band, one other small ring, small stud earrings. If earlobe gauges are worn, they must be in a neutral color.	Large or hoop earrings, necklaces, bracelets, spike or other pierced cartilage earrings
Visible piercings and tattoos must be covered with make-up, white or black cloth sleeves, or small	Jewelry in piercings (oral and dermal) that cannot be disguised or covered must be removed

natural-colored bandages. Tattoos on fingers and hands are the only exception.	
<b>Personal Hygiene</b>	
Fingernails – clean, short, smooth, clear or light-colored nail polish (not chipped)	False/enhanced nails, bright or dark polish colors
Hair – natural tones, clean, neatly styled, off the collar, pulled back from the face and secured in the back.	Unnatural hair colors, unsecured hair
Beards/mustaches neat and closely trimmed	Other facial hair such as long sideburns
Makeup – minimal, natural looking	Extreme or dark colors, heavy make-up
Clean, fresh-scented	Offensive body odor, cigarette smells, heavy cologne or after-shave

A student who is non-compliant with the dress code will receive a written Professionalism Warning. Any student found to have a dress code violation that may negatively impact patient, staff and/or student well-being or safety is ineligible to remain in the clinical area and will receive an absence for the clinical day.

### Student Conduct

Students must observe the Vista College code of conduct and govern themselves in a professional manner. Students will be held responsible and accountable for exhibiting personal and emotional characteristics considered important by the nursing profession. The Student Conduct and Discipline policy, found in the College Catalog, as well as additional offenses, including inappropriate or unethical behavior and professional misconduct, may result in suspension from the learning environment or dismissal from the college.

During Zoom classes, students are expected to participate with both audio and video platforms. Cameras must remain on with full view of the student's face during the entire class period. Students should arrange a home learning environment which minimizes distractions, conduct themselves in a professional manner (up right posture, appropriate clothing, no smoking/vaping, no eating, etc.) and fully participate in each educational experience. Students participating in Zoom classes while working, driving, shopping, cooking, and/or other non-educational activities will be in violation of the Student Conduct policy and must meet with the Nursing Program Director.

### Student Conduct

ACCEPTABLE	NOT ACCEPTABLE
<b>Behaviors include but are not limited to:</b>	
Arriving on time and prepared for all learning experiences	Missing, arriving late and/or being unprepared for any learning experience
Providing prompt and direct notification if late or absent to class or clinical	Failing to notify or communicate with instructors
Demonstrating honesty, courtesy and respect when communicating with faculty, staff and peers	Demonstrating rude or inappropriate behaviors
Using culturally sensitive, as well as educationally and developmentally appropriate, language in all interactions	Fighting, threatening or intentionally harassing another person
Maintaining patients' rights to dignity, privacy, and confidentiality	Breaching patient confidentiality
Participating in the learning process by asking questions in classroom, laboratory and clinical settings	Performing unsafe nursing care; Compromising the safety of a patient
Seeking out new learning experiences	Performing nursing tasks without supervision; Leaving patient care area without approval from the instructor
Submitting all assignments by the due date	Cheating or plagiarizing

## **Academic Integrity, Plagiarism and Copyright Infringement**

Vista College requires all students, faculty, and staff to conduct themselves and produce academic work in an ethical manner. Students are expected to adhere to the highest academic standards.

Plagiarism is defined as the use of another person's or a group's words or ideas without attribution of the source of that information, resulting in the false representation as one's own work. More specifically, to avoid plagiarizing, a student or other writer must give credit when he/she uses:

- Another person's idea, opinion, or theory
- Any facts, statistics, graphs, drawing - any piece of information that are not common knowledge
- Quotations of another person's actual spoken or written words
- Paraphrases of another person's spoken or written words
- Another person's data, solutions, or calculations without permission and/or recognition of the source, including the act of accessing another person's computerized files without authorization

It is the responsibility of the student to know what constitutes plagiarism, so even unintentional plagiarism is actionable. Ignorance is not a legitimate defense against a charge of plagiarism. Cheating, falsifying work or plagiarism will not be tolerated. The penalties for these offenses are as follows:

- First offense - "0" on the assignment or test
- Second offense - "F" for the course.
- Third offense - "F" for the course and may be expelled from the college.

Copyright infringement is using someone else's ideas or material, which may include a song, a video, a movie clip, a piece of visual art, a photograph, and other creative works, without authorization or compensation, if compensation is appropriate. The use of copyright material without permission is against federal law and penalties may include fines and/or imprisonment. Students, faculty, and staff must avoid copyright infringement.

As a consequence of expanded availability of digitized files and computing, peer-to-peer file sharing has become common place. However, making a copyrighted material available to others through the use of file sharing networks is also prohibited and is considered copyright infringement.

### **Student Concerns**

A prompt and equitable process for resolving student concerns is available to any student who believes that a school decision or action has adversely affected his/her status, rights, or privileges. Students must address their concerns about an educational program by following the Nursing Department's Appeal Process outlined below and in Appendix A.

#### Informal Resolution

Students who identify a concern may have it addressed expeditiously without the need for the issue to go to the Appeal Committee.

1. Students must first make a reasonable effort to resolve the issue with the instructor or staff member involved. If the concern relates to a test or quiz question, the test-item rebuttal form must be completed and submitted to the instructor. Issues involving another student or a third party should be brought directly to the Nursing Program Director or Director of Education.
2. If the issues is not resolved with the individual instructor or staff member, the student may complete a Student Issue/Concern Form and meet with the Nursing Program Director or designee
3. If the issues has not been resolved with the Nursing Program Director, the student may file a Formal Appeal

Student Concern/Issue Form, found in Appendix B, provides for documentation of the concern, discussion with the faculty member or administrator, and desired outcomes, and is completed when students meet with faculty or administration regarding a concern.

### Formal Nursing Appeal

The Nursing Department Appeals Committee acts upon requests for exceptions to existing academic policies and requirements. The committee works to find equitable and reasonable solutions supported by evidence.

- The Appeal Committee consists of at least five members which include representatives from nursing faculty, nursing leadership and campus leadership. Nursing Department personnel must represent a majority of the Appeal Committee.
- For a Formal Appeal, the student must complete and submit a Formal Appeal Form, found in Appendix C, within 72 hours of the event.
- The Appeal Committee will convene within five (5) business days of receiving the appeal form to evaluate the student's appeal based on the following:
  - Appeal form and supportive documentation
  - Student academic performance
  - Impact of significant non-academic issues
  - Student interview, if she/he desires to present her/his case to the committee
  - Additional documentation provided by the student
- The Appeal Committee will provide the student with a formal response to the appeal within 48 hours.
- If the decision of the Appeal Committee is unsatisfactory to the student, she/he may request a review by initiating Step 3: Formal Grievance within 72 hours of receiving the Appeal Committee's decision.

### Formal Grievance

In instances where all other attempts at resolution have failed, a student may direct unresolved issues to the Corporate Director of Nursing. The grievance must contain:

- The issue for which the student is filing the grievance
- The date the student met with an instructor or staff member and the outcome of this meeting as outlined in Step 1 of the Informal Resolution
- The date the student met with the Nursing Program Director and the outcome of this meeting as outline in Step 2 of the Informal Resolution
- All documentation from the Formal Appeal and/or additional documentation which may assist in making a decision about the grievance
- The outcome the student seeks

The grievance should be sent to:

Dr. Tami Little  
Corporate Director of Nursing  
[tlittle@vistacollege.edu](mailto:tlittle@vistacollege.edu)

Students may also direct unresolved issues to:

Education Futures Group  
Attn: Compliance  
300 N. Coit, Suite 1400  
Richardson, TX 75080  
[compliance@vistacollege.edu](mailto:compliance@vistacollege.edu)  
972-733-3431



## **STUDENT HEALTH**

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Students are required to maintain health status sufficient to meet all requirements of the nursing program.

- Student must successfully complete all required immunizations by week 12 of the first semester
- If applicable, students who are absent and miss a campus-based clinic or scheduled clinical appointment are responsible for completing immunizations at their own expense within the time requirement provided
- Students are responsible for all financial obligations incurred with any illness/accident
- Students are encouraged to carry personal health insurance
- The process for requesting American Disabilities Act accommodations are outline in the school catalog.

### **Admission Drug Screening**

Applicants are required to have an 11-panel substance drug screening prior to sitting in any classes. Screening methods include via urine, blood or hair follicle analysis. A positive drug screen will result in cancelation of the candidate's application. Refusal of drug testing will result in cancelation of the candidate's application.

### **Immunizations**

Due to the nature of required clinical experiences in a variety of the healthcare settings, the Nursing Department has specific health and immunization requirements for students. Nursing students are required to maintain current immunity for the following throughout their educational experience:

- Documentation of immunity to Measles, Mumps and Rubella
- Documentation of immunity to Varicella
- Annual documentation Tuberculin testing (PPD) with results <3 months prior to the start of the program **-OR-** Submission of a chest x-ray and TB Questionnaire for students known to be PPD positive
- Documentation of Hepatitis B vaccination or proof of immunity
- Td (Tdap is recommended) within the past 10 years
- Documentation of seasonal flu vaccination as required by clinical facilities

### **CPR Certification**

Students must maintain current CPR certification which includes "one person and two person" rescue and care of adults, children, infants, and choking resuscitation. Students are required to have a copy in their student file an American Heart Association (AHA) Healthcare provider card. CPR certification by any other provider will not be accepted. Students will be required to have the proper CPR certification prior to the start of clinical rotation. Students will NOT be permitted to attend clinical without current CPR. If a student's CPR card expires, the student will be required to obtain the AHA Health provider card. It is the student's responsibility to renew and pay for CPR certifications and to ensure that CPR certification is current.

### **Liability and Health Insurance**

While students are participating in assigned clinical experiences, students are covered under Vista College's General Liability Policy. Students are encouraged to carry a personal health/accident insurance policy. Students who do not have health insurance may obtain information about free or low cost health care from the College.

### **Injury/Accidents**

If a student is injured during the clinical experience, he or she must inform the instructor immediately, to initiate the reporting process. Agreements with clinical facilities demand specific procedural steps that faculty and students are expected to follow.

Students involved in an accident or who are injured while on campus are responsible for reporting the circumstances immediately to a staff member. Failure to report an incident and to complete appropriate documentation may result in dismissal from the program.

### **Exposure Guidelines**

Nursing Department Accidental Needle Stick Procedures establish the policy and protocol for accidental needle sticks that occur at on campus or at a clinical site. It is expected that students, faculty, or staff who are involved in an accidental needle stick receive immediate medical attention and are offered counseling, evaluation, and treatment, as necessary. The protocol calls for immediate action in providing medical evaluation, treatment and follow-up to students, faculty and staff involved in an exposure incident. In accordance with OSHA regulations, these procedures must be strictly followed.

### **Latex Allergy/Sensitivity**

Latex is used in a variety of medical products including, but not limited to, gloves, blood pressure, equipment, tourniquets, urinary catheters, and certain skin barriers such as Tegaderm. Allergic reactions range from mild to severe. Students who experience allergy symptoms should

- Cease contact with the product and notify the faculty member
- Notify a primary health care provider and/or seek immediate emergency medical care, if necessary

### **For-Cause Drug Screening**

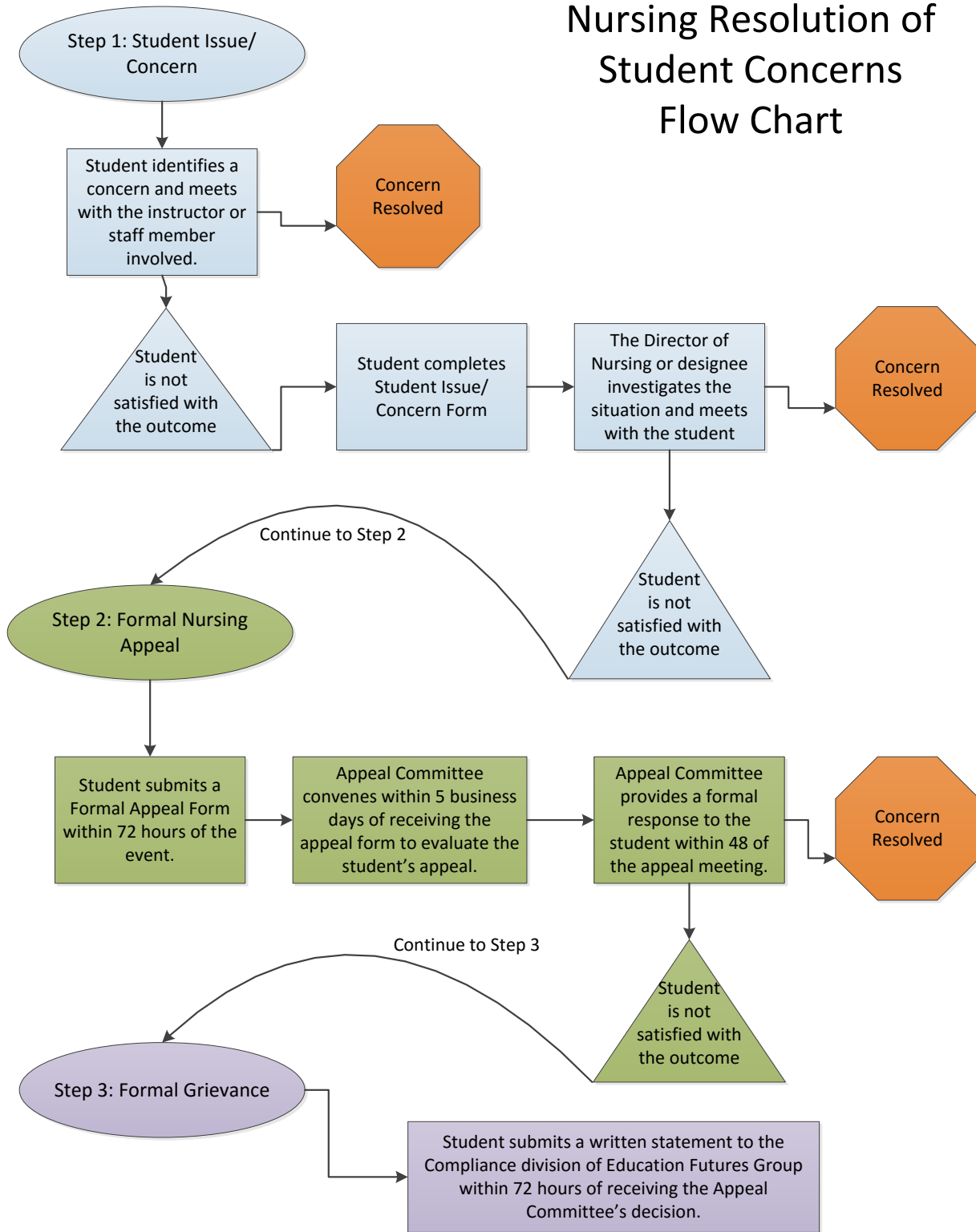
If a nursing faculty member has reasonable cause to suspect the ability of a nursing student to perform the requirements of the program due to impairment by alcohol, prescription or non-prescription drugs, the student will be reported to the Nursing Program Director. Administration reserves the right to require random drug screening from any student at any time during the program if there is reasonable cause to believe the student may be impaired due use/misuse of, or being under the influence of, alcoholic beverages, illegal drugs or prescription or non-prescription drugs.

- Observed behaviors that may result in for cause assessment:
  - Inappropriate and/or unprofessional behavior
  - Odor of suspicious nature
  - Unkempt appearance
  - Clinical behavior inconsistent with level in program
  - Slurred speech
  - Involvement in an incident or occurrence requiring an incident report
  - Speech patterns which indicate interruption of thought processes
  - Inappropriate affect
  - Unsteady gait
  - Confusion
  - Sleeping during educational activities
  - Written statements of attestation by peers, campus or clinical faculty or staff of alcohol or drug use or impaired behavior
- If any of these behaviors cause the faculty or clinical instructor to suspect the student may be impaired by alcohol or drugs, the following steps will be taken:
  - The instructor will remove the student from the classroom, lab, patient care, or other assigned work area and contact the Nursing Program Director immediately.
  - Upon the student's oral consent, the Nursing Program Director or designee will arrange for transportation to take the student to a designated medical service facility for drug testing. The cost will be paid by the College.
  - The student must have picture ID in his/her possession.
  - After testing, the student should call the transportation service for transport home; the cost will be paid by the College.

- Students who provide written attestation confirming alcohol or drug use still require drug testing.
  - The College will pay all costs associated with the for-cause drug testing.
- If a student refuses for-cause testing
  - The instructor will remove the student from the classroom, lab or clinical setting pending a full investigation. The Nursing Program Director will be immediately notified of the situation.
  - The instructor will arrange for transportation to take the student home. If the student refuses transportation, the student should be informed that security/law enforcement will be notified.
  - Refusal of for-cause drug testing will result in dismissal from the program.
- Test results
  - If the student tests *positive* for prescribed substances, the student must seek medical attention to discontinue the use of the identified substance before being allowed to return to academic activities. This applies to the use of marijuana even if prescribed by a physician for medical purposes.
  - If the results of the test(s) are *positive* for alcohol, non-prescribed legal substances, or other illegal substances the student will be dismissed from the program.
  - If the results of the test(s) are *negative* for drugs, alcohol, prescribed or non-prescribed legal substances, or illegal substances the student will meet with the Nursing Program Director and Director of Education within 24 hours of the test results to discuss the circumstances surrounding the observed behavior(s).
  - If the indicator was behavioral, consideration will be given to a possible medical or psychological condition causing the symptoms and a medical or psychological clearance may be required before returning.
  - Based on the information provided and further medical or psychological evaluation, if warranted, the Nursing Program Director and Director of Education will make a decision regarding return to academic activities.
- Continued evidence of impairment for any reason may be required to undergo further evaluation.
  - Any repeat or rescheduled drug testing will be by hair follicle which traces illegal drug use for past 6 months, and will be at the student's expense.
  - The College reserves the right to require mental health clearance or random drug screening when student behavior is considered to be a threat to the welfare of others, and will be at the student's expense.

**Appendix A: Resolution of Student Concern Process**

# Nursing Resolution of Student Concerns Flow Chart



**Appendix B: Student Concern/Issue Form**

**Student Concern/Issue Form**

**Student Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone Number:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Describe your concern/issue in detail including the names of persons, locations, and dates of occurrence (attach any additional documentation, if necessary).**

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**Students are encouraged to discuss their concerns and issues through informal conferences with the appropriate instructor, staff, or student. Have you made an attempt to resolve this issue? If yes, describe the outcome.**

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**What is your desired outcome?**

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*Student Signature*

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*Date*

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*Received by Nursing PD or designee*

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*Date*

*Written / Verbal (circle one) response provided to the student on \_\_\_\_\_.*  
*Date*

**Include a copy of the response with the final concern/issue form**

**Original to student file**

**Copy to student**



## **Nursing Student Handbook**

### **Acknowledgment of Receipt**

I hereby certify that I have received the Nursing Student Handbook. Nursing faculty members presented pertinent policies to me and I was given the opportunity to answer questions. I will read the entire handbook and be responsible for all information contained in the handbook. My continued enrollment in the nursing program signifies my willingness to abide by the rules and regulations contained herein. I understand that I must comply with all policies as presented in the Nursing Student Handbook as well as those in the Vista College Catalog.

Student's printed name: \_\_\_\_\_

Student's signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

This signed statement will be kept in your file.