



SOUTH TEXAS
COLLEGE

Vocational Nursing Student Handbook

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VOCATIONAL NURSING MISSION STATEMENT AND PHILOSOPHY

Mission

The mission of the School of Vocational Nursing at South Texas College is to meet the educational needs of our students in order that they gain the knowledge required to practice vocational nursing and serve the diverse needs of our community.

We will continue to build for the future by focusing on student engagement, retention and success with emphasis on researched evidence based on practice. Through collaborative leadership and learning, we ensure consumer safety, protection, and service excellence.

Philosophy

The Vocational Nursing Program supports the Vision, helps fulfill the Purpose, and aligns with the Core Values, Guiding Principles and Strategic Directions of the Comprehensive Mission for South Texas College.

In keeping with the philosophy of the Differentiated Essential Competencies (DECS), it is our belief that the practice of nursing consists of the following essential concepts: Members of the Profession, Provider of Patient Centered Care, Patient Safety Advocate, and Member of the Health Care Team.

We, the Faculty members of South Texas College Vocational Nursing Program, will accept responsibility for creating a transformative learning environment and facilitating educational experiences for students. These educational experiences will be enhanced through open communication, faculty accessibility, modeling caring, and acting as facilitators in the learning process along with arming students with the skills required for lifelong learning.

The vocational nursing student will achieve their goals through didactic, simulation technology, clinical experiences, and community service.

VOCATIONAL NURSING CORE COMPETENCIES

The Vocational Nursing core competencies align with the [Differentiated Essential Competencies 2021.pdf](#) (DECS).

At the end of the Vocational Nursing Program, the student will apply nursing knowledge, clinical judgment, and safe behaviors within the Vocational Nursing scope of practice.

CURRICULUM OBJECTIVES

This course of study will provide the student with the opportunity to acquire skills necessary to:

1. Utilize the nursing process effectively in assessing, planning, implementing, and evaluating individualized client care.
2. Administer safe and effective nursing measures that are preventive, supportive, caring, therapeutic, and rehabilitative while adhering to principles of nursing practice.
3. Function as a member of the health care team by assisting the physician and/or registered nurse in caring for patients with complex health needs.
4. Communicate effectively; promoting rapport and understanding with clients, family members and associates while respecting established lines of authority.
5. Demonstrate the ability to administer medications safely and accurately through knowledge of drug classification, effects, reactions, and indications, and calculation of correct dosage.
6. Engage in self-directed activities, which will foster personal and professional growth through continuing education.
7. Meet requirements necessary to apply for Licensure Examination approved by the Texas Board of Nursing.

Please visit the VN website to view the [Degree plans](#) for Fall and Spring Admission.

GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES

- A. College, Division, and Program Guidelines and Procedures. Students must understand and adhere to STC policies, guidelines, and procedures outlined in the

[STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT](#)

[SOUTH TEXAS COLLEGE STUDENT HANDBOOK](#)

[DIVISION OF NURSING AND ALLIED HEALTH HANDBOOK](#)

Students must read, understand, and strictly abide by the VN Nursing Student Handbook. The student is responsible for clarifying any policy in the above-mentioned Handbooks.

- B. Covid 19- and unforeseen declarations Statement: Due to the unpredictable nature of the current pandemic, and any unforeseen declarations, course meeting times/dates,

requirements, and method of delivery may change according to state and federal guidelines to ensure student, faculty, and staff safety and well-being. Further, all VN Students must comply with the updated and current information and guidance available on the following [STC Emergency Preparedness webpage](#). Please refer to [Policy 3680](#).

- C. Board of Nursing Guidelines. Further, students must also adhere to the standards, guidelines, and requirements, as stated and stipulated in Texas Board of Nursing regulations, found on the [Texas Board of Nurse Examiners](#) website.

ATTENDANCE STANDARDS

Classroom Attendance Standard:

Classroom attendance is expected of all students. Full attendance is essential to maximize learning.

- Students are allowed 2 days of absence for each lecture class.
- For each day of absence beyond these 2 days, five (5) points will be deducted from the student's final term grade.
- An absence includes being tardy to class two (2) times.
- Tardiness is defined as arriving five (5) minutes after the official class start time up to 30 minutes after the official class start time.
- Arrival after 30 minutes will be counted as an absence.

EXAMPLE: Scheduled clinical time: 6:45 a.m.

Tardy: Arrival between 6:50 a.m. - 7:15 a.m.

Absence: Arrival after 7:15 a.m.

- Students who leave the class 30 minutes prior to the scheduled dismissal time will be counted absent.
- Repeatedly leaving the classroom will not be tolerated. You may be given an absence for the day.
- Students who report to the classroom out of uniform (earrings, unofficial jackets, unofficial shoes, no ID badge etc.) may be counted absent and asked to leave the class.
- Students who report to the classroom unprepared (have not read material, no homework, no book, etc.) may be counted absent and asked to leave the class.

Clinical/Simulation Attendance Standard:

The South Texas College Vocational Nursing Program maintains a strict attendance standard for the clinical setting to maximize professionalism of the student Vocational Nurse

Throughout the 3-semester clinical educational experience, a maximum of 7 days absence will be allowed. Absences more than 7 days during the entire program will result in failure of the clinical course the student is attending when the 7th absence occurs.

A list of each Vocational Nursing Clinical courses and allowed number of absences are as follows:

Course Number & Title	Allowed Number of Absences
VNSG 1160	1
VNSG 1161	1
VNSG 1162	1
VNSG 1261	2
VNSG 1362	2
Total Number of Absences	7

- **Tardiness** is a critical part of clinical attendance. A student is deemed tardy if arrival is (5) minutes after the assigned start time.
- Tardiness of thirty (30) minutes or more after the assigned start time will be counted as an absence.
- Two (2) tardies will be counted as an absence.
- For each day of absence beyond the allowed number of absence days, five (5) points will be deducted from the student's final semester clinical grade.
- If the student is absent from clinical, they **MUST** contact the Vocational Nursing clinical instructor 30 minutes before the assigned start time. Failure to do this could result in dismissal from the program.
- Students who leave the clinical site 30 minutes prior to the scheduled dismissal time will be counted absent.

The student who reports to the assigned clinical experience unprepared (without required written nursing care plans, medication cards, and reference materials, supplies, or appropriate dress, etc.) may be dismissed from the clinical that day and the absence will be counted towards the maximum allowed.

WITHDRAWAL

When students withdraw from the VN program, they must complete the following:

- Notify their instructors
- Visit the Office of Admissions & Records to officially withdraw from the course with a grade of “W.”

RE-ADMISSION

Students who fail or withdraw from a course /courses in one semester will not continue in the VN program and will follow the subsequent procedure:

Step 1: Meet with their instructor to confirm their current grade (s) and status. If no resolution is reached, proceed to step 2.

Step 2: Meet with the VN Program Chair. If no resolution is reached, proceed to step 3.

Step 3: Meet with the Dean of Nursing and Allied Health.

- VN Program students who fail or withdraw from a course/courses may request readmission **once** within two years of dropping or failing. (Example: Failed fall 2021 must readmit no later than fall 2023.)
- VN-RN Progressive eligible students will be unable to continue in the VN-RN progressive eligible group if they fail to complete any course with a grade of 78 or better. If the student wishes to continue in a nursing program at STC, the student has the option of applying to either the Vocational Nursing Program (but will not qualify for the VN-RN eligible group), or the student may apply for the Associate Degree Nursing Program at the next application period.
- Student is denied readmission if failure or withdrawal was related to unsafe practice, dishonesty, and/or unethical behavior.
- Readmission is based on a selective, competitive point system that includes the most recent HESI score, the Nursing Course GPA, the number of courses failed, and available space. Readmission may be anytime within the two-year period the level is offered.
- To promote success in the VN program, students will receive pre-admission assignments and a customized schedule upon readmission. The customized schedule may include repeating courses previously passed and/or being readmitted to a different level.
- After an unsuccessful third attempt in the VN program, the student must do the following:

1. Qualify for readmission based on the point system
2. Submit a letter indicating the reason the student believes they failed or found it necessary to drop
3. Attach supporting documentation and attach a plan of action for success.
4. Undergo an interview at the discretion of the Admission & Readmission Committee to determine if re-entry to the VN program is granted

GRADING AND EVALUATION

Grades:

Theory and Clinical:

Based on numeric computations as determined by the current computer grade calculation program as follows:

A = 100% - 92% B = 91% - 85% C = 84% - 78% D = 77% - 70% F = 69% or less

If you wish to question a grade on a test, quiz, or any other graded material, please contact the instructor within two weeks of receiving the grade in question. If the grade is not questioned within the two-week time frame, the grade will stand as posted.

Students must achieve a final grade of 78 to pass all courses in the vocational nursing program.

Final course grades **will not** be given out by instructors either by phone or in person. All final Course grades may be accessed online through STC Student Services after they are posted by the instructor.

CLINICAL PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

Evaluation is an ongoing process. The student will receive an evaluation at the end of each clinical rotation and a cumulative evaluation at the end of each semester to reflect their current level of clinical competency.

CLINICAL PERFORMANCE EVALUATION GUIDELINES

- Individual clinical evaluations will be given by the faculty at least one (1) per semester. Also, each practicum has specific requirements and objectives that must be met to receive a passing evaluation. Students will be evaluated by an adopted grading rubric and must receive **78% or better** to progress to the next level.
- Students are encouraged to make an appointment with the instructor at any time he/she feels it is necessary to communicate areas of need to instructor.
- A clinical conference will be held at the conclusion of each semester/term to review accomplishment of level objectives and eligibility to progress to next clinical level.

Conference Summary Forms may be used in the clinical setting to address areas of concern. Students are required to sign conference summary and evaluation forms. The student's signature means **only** that the student has received a copy of the evaluation that will be placed in their record. The student may submit a written response to the permanent file if so desired. Furthermore, if the student does not sign the conference summary, the instructor will document their refusal and any reasons why it is not being signed

***Note: Conference Summaries may be used at any time to share areas of concern with students and to indicate areas that need improvement.*

DRUG TESTING

Students seeking readmission to a South Texas College Nursing and Allied Health Division Program will be required to obtain a new drug and alcohol test which include, at a minimum, the following:

- Substances tested prior to placement at the clinical/practicum site must, at a minimum, include amphetamines, barbiturates, benzodiazepines, opiates, fentanyl analogs, methadone, marijuana, meperidine, and cocaine.
- A student may be required to undergo additional drug and alcohol testing upon reasonable suspicion that the student has violated a clinical/practicum site's policies and after any incident that involves injury or property damage.

The clinical/practicum site shall not bear the cost of any such tests. Should the testing disclose adverse information to any student, the clinical/practicum site shall have no obligation to accept that student at the clinical/practicum site. To the extent that any student violates the policy for drug or alcohol abuse after placement at the facility or refuses to cooperate with the requirement for a search or reasonable suspicion and reportable accident testing, then the clinical/practicum site may immediately remove the student from participation in the Program at the facility.

PROFESSIONAL APPEARANCE GUIDELINES

Our patients have the right to expect a clean, pressed uniform in good repair. The uniform must be worn for clinical as well as class. While in uniform, the student must comply with all professional appearance guidelines such as hair jewelry, etc.

VN Program Dress Code

All students
Royal Blue Uniform
Standard white nursing shoes with closed toe and heels or all white (non-canvas) tennis shoes with conservative logo (no colored stripes.)
No colored or patterned undergarments that show through uniforms.
A fitted White or Royal Blue long-sleeved tshirt may be worn under uniform top, if desired, for warmth or to cover tattoos. Please note this does not mean a sweat shirt or sweater .
White pantyhose must be worn while wearing a dress. White socks, or white pantyhose while wearing pants. Note: White socks must fit above the ankle.
STC name Badges on left collar lapel.
School patch sewn on left sleeve of uniform; left side pocket of lab coat.
Clinical accessories such as penlight, scissors, stethoscope, watch with second hand, etc. are mandatory. Note: <u>No smart watches allowed.</u>

Note: When required, proper scrub attire will be worn in place of standard uniform for Labor and Delivery, the Operating Room, Recovery Room, or other designated areas. A uniform is to be worn to sites requiring scrub attire and changes will be made at the facility. Complete uniforms are to be worn at all times unless otherwise instructed.

HAIR / COSMETICS

Hair must be clean, well groomed, above the collar, and away from the face to adhere to Infection Control standards. Hair barrettes should be of color compatible to the hair color. Ribbons, scarves, colored barrettes and alligator clips are not acceptable.

When hair is worn up, it must be in a braid, bun or French twist. All loose hair must be restrained, including ponytails (men/women), and bangs will be worn above the eyebrows. Male students must keep beards away from the neckline. Mustaches must be clean and neatly trimmed or be clean-shaven.

Hair color for nursing students should maintain a professional appearance. Bright colors such as pink, purple, and green, as well as hair color designs like stripes, should be avoided.

Cosmetic use in nursing should be kept minimal and discreet to maintain a professional appearance. Makeup should be understated, and heavy or bold cosmetics should be avoided. This ensures a clean, professional image that prioritizes patient comfort and trust.

JEWELRY

Only a minimum amount of jewelry should be worn. This provides safe, comfortable, and sanitary conditions for the patient and the care provider. The student may wear:

1. Earrings, one pair of small studs. No other body jewelry should be visible in the clinical setting.
2. Rings, one plain band only – **NO STONES**, no grooves or carvings and/or no other designs.
3. One wristwatch with a second hand. **NO SMART WATCHES ALLOWED.**
4. No necklaces or bracelets allowed.

TATTOOS

All visible tattoos are accepted unless deemed inappropriate by Vocational Nursing faculty. Faculty will notify students if tattoo requires covering.

FINGERNAILS

Nursing students may have freshly polished nails with only clear polish. Nail length should not exceed the tips of the fingers, and artificial nails are not allowed.

HYGIENE

Good oral hygiene and clean bodies, free of odor are essential. Cosmetics should be applied discretely.

GENERAL CLASSROOM ATTIRE

- While in uniform, the student must comply with all professional appearance guidelines such as hair, jewelry, etc.
- Uniforms must be worn to class. (See policy on Uniforms).
- Name badges must always be worn (class & clinicals).

PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR

1. Gum chewing is not permitted while in uniform on campus or on facility premises. This ensures clear communication, maintains professionalism, and respects patient and colleague interactions.
2. Family visitors or friends are not allowed in the classroom or clinical site. This also includes Supplemental Instructions and Success sessions. Your clinical instructor may ask your visitors to leave the building and wait for you outside until clinical rotation is over.
3. Using abusive language, having a lack of courtesy, being argumentative, resistant to directions, demanding, or having a hostile attitude is not considered a professional way of dealing with an issue. If needed, conference summary forms will be utilized by instructors to call attention to such behavior and may be brought to the program chair for further action.
4. Students must ask the instructor for permission to use a tape recorder in class.

Please refer to the [TX BON Rule 213.27](#)

CLINICAL EXPERIENCE GUIDELINES

The student's clinical experience is planned to develop nursing skills and to assess, organize, implement, and evaluate patient care. For the clinical experience to be both beneficial to the student and safe for the patient, the following guidelines have been established:

Patient Care and Procedures

5. The student should have received theoretical knowledge and practice of procedures before performing them in the clinical setting.
6. Each unit has a Procedure Manual that is readily accessible for reference. The student is responsible for performing procedures as outlined in the manual. Remove #6.
7. Skill Checklists will be given to each student along with clinical rotations. The student is responsible for using the Skills Checklist as directed.
8. Students are the direct responsibility of the clinical instructor or designated supervisor and will seek their supervision or advice as the situation indicates.
9. Students will not give any medication except under direct supervision of a Registered Nurse or other designated LVN or RN.
10. Before any procedure is done independently in a clinical area the student must first check with their clinical instructor.

Communication

1. The student will report to the instructor or designated supervisor before leaving the unit for any reason.
2. Students are not to answer the telephone while in the clinical area.
3. Students will not take verbal orders of any kind or receive report on patients returned or transferred into the units. A qualified staff member should be sought for this function.
4. The appropriate signature will accompany any documentation of information by the student in the permanent record, to include full name, SVN, STC.
5. Students may not make or receive personal phone calls in the clinical area. However, on their breaks or at lunch they may use personal phones to make calls.
6. In emergencies, family members need to call the Nursing/Allied Health Department so the instructor may be contacted about the emergency and inform the student.
7. No pagers or cell phones allowed in classrooms or clinical setting. Unless authorized by the designated instructor.

STATE BOARD ELIGIBILITY FELONY (ADVISING)

I _____ have been advised that conviction of a felony may make me ineligible for licensure as a vocational nurse in the state of Texas. I have read the following five questions and understand the process to follow for the Board of Nurse Examiners evaluation if necessary.

The following five questions are written as they appear on the application for licensure through the Texas State Board of Nurse Examiners.

- | | | |
|-----------|----|--|
| 1. Yes | No | Have you ever been arrested for any offense (whether or not the case was Adjudicated)? |
| 2. Yes | No | Have you ever pleaded guilty or nolo-contender to any Class B or Class A misdemeanor? |
| 3. Yes | No | Have you ever pleaded guilty or nolo-contender to any felony offense? |
| 4. Yes | No | Have you ever served a sentence of imprisonment or incarceration in any jail or prison? |
| 5. Yes | No | Are you now on have you ever been on probation, deferred adjudication, pretrial diversion or parole? |
| 6. Yes | No | Do you have any pending criminal charges or unresolved arrests; excluding minor traffic violations driving under the influence or any drug or intoxicant is not a minor traffic violations? |
| 7. Yes | No | Do you have any juvenile record of arrests or convictions (some licensing authorities do include this)? |
| 8. Yes | No | Have you ever had any license, certification, or registration revoked, suspended, or sanctioned by any |
| 9. local, | | 9. local, state or federal agency; or have you ever been a party of any proceeding in which your license, certification, or registration was being revoked, suspended, or sanctioned, regardless of the outcome? |
| 10. Yes | No | 10. Have you ever been dismissed from a health professions program for other than academic deficiencies (safety, academic integrity, non-professional conduct or unsafe clinical practice are not an academic deficiency). |

If you answered "YES" to any of the questions above, please meet with the NAH Clinical Compliance Specialist or program Chair for the selected NAH clinical program you are seeking admission to or in which you are currently enrolled for guidance and advisement regarding policy #3337 requirements concerning criminal histories.

I have been provided a copy of policy #3337, and I am aware of its requirements concerning criminal histories. I swear or affirm that the answers that I have provided herein are true and correct. I understand and acknowledge that I am under an affirmative duty to supplement or update my answers at any points in time when my answers would no longer be correct as stated. I further understand and acknowledge that if I have provided false answers it may constitute grounds for denying me admission to the program or for removing me from any NAH program.

Print Name

Signature

Date