

**Addendum to the Vocational Nursing (VN)  
Student Handbook  
For COVID 19 Pandemic Fall, Spring and Summer**

In line with the Academic Continuity Plan as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic affecting the courses offered in the VN Program of South Texas College, and in compliance with the order of Hidalgo and Starr Counties, CDC recommendations and the Texas Department of State Health Services, the following changes were adapted after thorough and thoughtful deliberation by the VN Department.

These changes are in line with upholding the academic standards based on the Texas Board of Nursing guidelines with utmost regard for students' safety, well-being, welfare, and benefit in successfully completing the courses for Fall, Spring, and Summer.

The VN program is considered an *Essential Program* that must meet criteria set forth by the Texas Board of Nursing. The criteria include but are not limited to Face to Face meetings for Lecture, Labs, Clinical, and Testing.

To support and assist students in their courses, the faculty, staff, and Support Services are available to ensure student success. Flexibility and creativity will be exercised on a case-to-case basis in addressing internet connectivity concerns, delivery of didactic, clinical and skills classes, and evaluation methodologies. This includes the following and will be updated as necessary:

- A. All VNSG courses will be delivered in either a face to face, online or hybrid platform for Fall 2021 – Until further notice.
- B. The semester schedule will be provided internally and will not necessarily reflect your JagNet schedule. Plan to be in class Monday – Friday either virtual, or face-to-face.
- C. Each student must have the following to participate in the VN program: working internet, lap top computer with working camera and mic, a second device such as a working cell phone or tablet with camera capability with internet service or WIFI for testing purposes. These devices must be compatible with computer programs and software utilized in the VN Program.
- D. Students must always observe online Netiquette during virtual meetings. Students must be dressed in uniform and maintain a non-distractive environment.
- E. Students must make informed decisions based on the current situation under COVID 19 to participate with the requirements set forth by the VN program.
- F. An Academic Continuity Plan will be followed in the delivery and evaluation of every course in the program, prepared and adapted by the faculty. This includes the transition to the online and hybrid platform utilizing the current existing programs and software used such as but not limited to Blackboard LMS, Blackboard Collaborate, Pronto, Proctor U, Examsoft, Elsevier, Evolve, ATI, and HESI products, Zoom, and Respondus Lockdown Browser, Proctor U, Exam Monitor for test administration among others.

- G. The requirements of the course, including but not limited to course testing, location, delivery time, and date, may change suddenly and with very little notice to students as deemed necessary by the VN program.
- H. Courses with Labs: These courses require **in-person** Lab on designated days and times, as permitted by Federal, State and County Safety Guidelines, and by requirement of the TX BON.
- I. Students will participate in Mandatory New student orientation, General orientation, and Boot Camps as deemed necessary by the VN program faculty during the Fall, Spring and Summer semesters. Participation in orientation and bootcamps may be in a Face to Face, Online, or Hybrid environment. Course Orientation will be conducted per Course during the Semester, at the start of each course.

**Fall 2021 – until further notice**

- **Front loading courses** may be scheduled to pave the way for students to have the opportunity to complete Clinical courses with 50% **hands-on** clinical experience. The semester schedule will be provided internally and will not necessarily reflect your JagNet schedule. Faculty will ensure reinforcement and distribution of content in theory classes to support the success of students. The goal is to prevent the delay of students while awaiting clinical facilities' decision to accommodate students in the ever-changing situation and guidelines under COVID 19.
- If students are not able to complete their clinical hours (direct **hands-on** patient care) for a specific semester of Fall, Spring and Summer, the students will receive an **incomplete (I) in their clinical course**, and can complete the course the following semester or onwards when clinical agencies are ready to accept students to their facility.
- When a student is ill with COVID 19 and is not able to complete Didactic/Clinical/Lab courses for a specific semester of Fall, Spring and Summer, the student may withdraw or receive an **incomplete (I)** depending on the case, and can complete the course the following semester if the course is offered, or when the course is offered again.
- The goal is the safety of every student, faculty, and staff in the VN Program. Health risks are associated with face to face contact in Clinicals, Skills, Classroom and Simulation activities. Therefore, strict observance of the CDC guidelines, national and local health authorities, and College guidelines with COVID 19 (i.e. wearing of masks, social distancing, and the like) is vital, and a requirement to participate in the VN program.
- Self-Questionnaire is a requirement to entering the campus or clinical facility as deemed necessary. Honest responses to the questionnaire are expected, and considered professional conduct.
- Each student has a responsibility of limiting exposure to COVID 19 by following Federal, State, and Local guidelines. These guidelines include but are not limited to avoiding groups of 10 or more, wearing face coverings, practicing social distancing, using appropriate hand hygiene, avoiding travel to other Countries. Failure to follow Federal, State, and Local guidelines will result in the inability to participate in the VN program.
- The educational environment in the VN program under the conditions of COVID 19 are

extremely stressful, and will include sudden changes, or changes made with very little notice to students. Students must make an informed decision based on the current situation under COVID 19 to participate with the requirements set forth by the VN program.

- Each student must have the following to participate in the VN program as deemed necessary by faculty: working internet, lap top computer with working camera and mic, a second device such as a working cell phone or tablet with camera capability with internet service or WIFI for testing purposes, face shield and a face mask for Face to Face interactions.
- The VN program and faculty fully understand and support a student currently unable to meet the requirements set forth by the VN program due to COVID 19. Therefore, students currently enrolled in the program are offered an Incomplete and may return to complete the course the following semester or when the course is offered in a traditional Face-to-Face environment.
- Students must complete contact hours as required by the TX BON, therefore, students are required to be present in face to face, online or hybrid classes, clinical, and labs as scheduled. A student who is not present during a course on any platform, will receive an absence. If the absence is associated with reasons due to COVID 19 the student will be required to obtain a medical clearance, make up the work missed during the absence at a time agreed upon with the faculty, and or the student will receive an **incomplete (I)** and can complete the course the following semester or when the course is offered again, and /or can complete the course the following semester or onwards when clinical agencies are ready to accept students to their facility.
- HESI specialty exams are scheduled strategically throughout the VN program. Due to the fluidity of the conditions under COVID 19, a scheduled HESI exam may be moved from one semester to another. Grading for the course would be altered to reflect the rescheduled exam.

#### **Admission and Readmission:**

- *Due to the uncertainty of COVID-19 Restrictions, the VN Program will determine the feasibility of HESI A2 testing before each application period and allow for HESI testing later during the program.*

*To ensure consistency in the VN Student Handbook, procedures, and guidelines herein, the provisions and stipulations as applied will be deemed amended by the above changes as noted in the **Addendum to the VN Student Handbook For COVID 19 Pandemic Fall, Spring and Summer.***