

Southern Union State Community College



Nursing Program Student Handbook
2025-2026

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THE CONTENT IN THIS HANDBOOK SUPERSEDES THE COLLEGE CATALOG AND STUDENT HANDBOOK.

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Nursing Program at Southern Union! You join a very select group of students who have attended Southern Union's nursing program since 1977. A distinguished group of men and women have graduated from the Nursing Programs at Southern Union, passed the licensure examination, and entered the employment setting with clinical skills second to none. Southern Union has an excellent reputation, primarily because of the graduates' performance and attitude following graduation. The graduates who preceded you significantly shaped this nursing program by offering valuable observations, opinions, suggestions, criticisms, and insight from a student's perspective. Your input as a student, and later as a graduate, is equally important to this nursing program, college, and community.

Southern Union values every student who attends the College and respects every student's rights and privileges. This *Student Handbook* has been prepared to allow you to carefully review the opportunities, rights, responsibilities, and policies that apply to you as a nursing student. Unless otherwise designated in a nursing course syllabus, these policies apply to each nursing course in which you enroll. If, for any reason, routine progression through the program is interrupted, policies in the *Student Handbook* and *College Catalog* at the time of readmission/reinstatement will apply.

Each person at the College is committed to your success – as a student, a professional, and most importantly, as an individual. If you need additional assistance, our doors are always open to you. Again, welcome to Southern Union.

Rhonda Davis MSN, RN
Dean of Health Sciences

Lisa Shiver DNP, RN
Nursing Department Chair

PROGRAM INFORMATION

STATE APPROVAL & NATIONAL ACCREDITATION STATUS

Southern Union State Community College's **Associate Degree Nursing** program is approved by the Alabama State Board of Nursing and accredited by the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN). The last self-study and on-site visit from the Alabama Board of Nursing was in the Summer of 2025 and from the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing in the Spring of 2021.

Southern Union State Community College's **Practical Nursing** program is approved by the Alabama State Board of Nursing and has received initial accreditation from the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN). The last self-study and on-site visit from the Alabama Board of Nursing was in the Summer of 2025 and from the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing in the Spring of 2021.

Comments or complaints can be directed to:

Alabama Board of Nursing
RSA Plaza, Suite 250
770 Washington Avenue
Montgomery, AL 36130-3900
(334) 293-5200

Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing
3390 Peachtree Road NE, Suite 1400
Atlanta, Georgia 30326
(404) 975-5000
www.acenursing.com

NURSING PROGRAM MISSION & PHILOSOPHY

MISSION

Our mission is to prepare students to practice safe, competent, patient-centered care in an increasingly complex and rapidly changing health care system. We seek to provide full and equal access to opportunities for educational success to meet the community's needs.

PHILOSOPHY

We believe that nursing is a dynamic profession, blending science with the use of evidence-based practice and clinical reasoning and the art of caring and compassion to provide quality, patient-centered care.

We believe learning is an interactive process in which faculty and students share responsibility to meet program outcomes. We believe in using educational methods that are current and supportive of students in the teaching and learning environment. Learning is enhanced by the presentation of information from simple to complex.

Nursing is guided by standards of practice and standards of professional performance. Standards reflect the values and priorities of the nursing profession. Therefore, we have integrated standards from the Quality and Safety Education for Nurses (QSEN) and the National League of Nursing (NLN) into our philosophy as part of our core values.

Practical Nursing End-of-Program Student Learning Outcomes/Graduate Competencies (Semester 3)	Associate Degree Nursing End-of-Program Student Learning Outcomes/Graduate Competencies (Semester 5)
Human Flourishing Promote the human dignity, integrity, self-determination, and personal growth of diverse patients, their families, and oneself to provide individualized, culturally appropriate, relationship-centered nursing care (NLN, 2014).	Human Flourishing Advocates for patients and families in ways that promote their self-determination, integrity, and ongoing growth as human beings (NLN, 2010).
Patient-Centered Care Advocates for the patient and family in the provision of compassionate and coordinated care to support the health, safety, and well-being of patients and families (QSEN, 2012).	Patient-Centered Care Recognize the patient or designee as the source of control and full partner in providing compassionate and coordinated care based on respect for the patient's preferences, values, and needs (QSEN, 2012).
Nursing Judgment Make judgments in practice, substantiated with evidence, that integrate nursing science in the provision of safe, quality care for diverse patients and their families in collaboration with the healthcare team (NLN, 2014).	Nursing Judgment Make judgments in practice, substantiated with evidence, that integrate nursing science in the provision of safe, quality care and promote the health of patients within a family and community context (NLN, 2010).
Informatics Incorporate information and technology within own scope of practice to support safe processes of care (QSEN, 2012).	Informatics Uses information and technology to communicate, manage knowledge, mitigate error, and support decision-making (QSEN, 2012).
Safety Demonstrate the effective use of strategies to reduce the risk of harm to self or others (QSEN, 2012).	Safety Minimizes the risk of harm to patients and providers through both system effectiveness and individual performance (QSEN, 2012).
Professional identity Articulate a unique role as a member of the healthcare team, committed to evidence-based practice, caring, advocacy, and safe quality care, to provide optimal healthcare for diverse patients and their families (NLN, 2014).	Professional Identity Implement one's role as a nurse in ways that reflect integrity, responsibility, ethical practices, and an evolving identity as a nurse committed to evidence-based practice, caring, advocacy, and safe, quality care for diverse patients within a family and community context (NLN, 2010).
Teamwork and Collaboration Function competently within own scope of practice as a member of the health care team (QSEN, 2012).	Teamwork and Collaboration Function effectively within nursing and inter-professional teams, fostering open communication, mutual respect, and shared decision-making to achieve quality patient care (QSEN, 2012).
Spirit of Inquiry Collaborate with healthcare team members, and utilize evidence, tradition, and patient preferences in predictable patient care situations to promote optimal health status (NLN, 2014).	Spirit of Inquiry Examine the evidence that underlies clinical nursing practice to challenge the status quo, question underlying assumptions, and offer new insights to improve the quality of care for patients, families, and communities (NLN, 2010).
Quality Improvement Utilize various sources of information to review outcomes of care identifying potential areas for improvement of the quality and safety of care (QSEN, 2012).	Quality Improvement Use data to monitor the outcomes of care processes and use improvement methods to design and test changes to continuously improve the quality and safety of health care systems (QSEN, 2012).
Evidence-Based Practice Implements evidence-based practice in the provision of individualized health care (QSEN, 2012)	Evidence-Based Practice Integrates best evidence-based practice with clinical expertise, patient/family preferences, and values for the delivery of optimal health care (QSEN, 2012).

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The conceptual framework derived from the philosophy forms a basis for the organization and structure of the nursing curriculum. This framework serves as a guide for nursing instruction in the attainment of student learning outcomes.

The framework consists of concepts that encompass the qualities of a successful graduate nurse. NLN competencies were chosen because they specifically define the competencies of the graduate associate degree nurse. QSEN competencies reflect current contemporary practice. Concepts interlace NLN and QSEN competencies to achieve the goal of providing graduate nurses with the tools needed to provide holistic care in an ever-changing healthcare delivery system. Each competency includes knowledge, skills, and attitudes to serve as a basis for consistent performance expectations across academic and practice settings.



SUSCC NURSING PROGRAM OUTCOMES

1. Performance on Licensure Exam

- The annual NCLEX-PN and NCLEX-RN pass rates will be at least 80% for all first-time test takers and will be reported by calendar year.

2. Program Completion

- 45% of the students who begin the first nursing course in the PN program will successfully complete the program within 3 semesters, which is 100% of the time frame allotted for the PN program.
- 50% of all students who begin the first nursing course in the ADN Mobility program will complete the program within 3 semesters, which is 100% of the usual timeframe for the ADN Mobility program.
- 75% of all traditional students who begin the first nursing course in the ADN program (NUR 211) will complete the program within 2 semesters, which is 100% of the time frame for the ADN coursework.

3. Job Placement

- 40% of the PN graduates will report employment as an LPN within six months following program completion.
- 95% of responding graduates will report employment as an RN within six months following program completion.

4. Program Satisfaction

- 95% of responding PN and ADN graduates will indicate they are satisfied with the program of learning at SUSCC.

5. Continuing Education in the Field

- 95% of PN graduates will continue their education in the healthcare field (ADN program).
- 70% of responding ADN graduates will indicate they are continuing their education in the healthcare field.

ADN DEGREE / PN CERTIFICATE REQUIREMENTS

1. Earn a minimum of 25% of all credits applied to the degree at Southern Union.
2. Complete at least 18 semester hours in discipline-specific courses required in the program of study at Southern Union.
3. Successfully complete a program of assessment.
4. Earn total credit hours (including transfer and native) equal to the minimum number of credit hours required in the program at the time the degree/certificate is granted.
5. Complete all requirements for graduation at Southern Union within one calendar year from the last term of attendance.
6. Comply with all formal procedures for graduation in accordance with college policy. See College Catalog.

ALABAMA COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM (ACCS)

STANDARDIZED NURSING CURRICULUM

	Theory Credit Hours	Weekly Theory Contact Hours	Lab Credit Hours	Weekly Lab Contact Hours	Clinical Credit Hours	Weekly Clinical Contact Hours	Total Credit Hours	Weekly Total Contact Hours
First Semester*								
NUR 112 – Fundamentals Concepts of Nursing	4	4	2	6	1	3	7	13
MTH 100 (or Higher)	3	3	0	0	0	0	3	3
BIO 201 – A & P I	3	3	1	2	0	0	4	5
Total	10	10	3	8	1	3	14	21
Second Semester**								
NUR 113 – Nursing Concepts	4	4	1	3	3	9	8	16
ENG 101 – English	3	3	0	0	0	0	3	3
PSY 210 – Human Growth and Development	3	3	0	0	0	0	3	3
BIO 202 A & P II	3	3	1	2	0	0	4	5
Total	13	13	2	5	3	9	18	27
Third Semester***								
NUR 114 – Nursing Concepts II ⁺	5	5	0	0	3	9	8	14
NUR 115 – Evidence-Based Clinical Reasoning	1	1	0	0	1	3	2	4
SPH 106 or 107 – Speech	3	3	0	0	0	0	3	3
Total	9	9	0	0	4	12	13	21
Fourth Semester								
NUR 211 – Advanced Nursing Concepts	4	4	0	0	3	9	7	13
BIO 220 – General Microbiology	2	2	2	4	0	0	4	6
Total	6	6	2	4	3	9	11	19
Fifth Semester****								
NUR 221 – Advanced Evidence-Based Clinical Reasoning	3	3	0	0	4	12	7	15
HUM (Ethics preferred)	3	3	0	0	0	0	3	3
Total	6	6	0	0	4	12	10	18
Program Total	4	4	7	17	15	4	66	106

A course grade of “C” or higher is required for all nursing and academic core courses.

*Upon successful completion of NUR 112, students are eligible to apply to take the Nursing Assistant Certification Examination (NACEP) to become a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA).

** Upon completion of NUR 113, students are eligible to apply to take the Medication Aide Certification Examination (MACE) through the Alabama Board of Nursing to become a Medication Aide (MAC).

***Upon successful completion of all third-semester coursework within the curriculum, students are eligible to apply to take the National Council Licensure Examination for Practical Nurses (NCLEX-PN).

****Upon successful completion of all fifth-semester coursework in the nursing curriculum, students are eligible to apply to take the National Council Licensure Examination for Registered Nurses (NCLEX-RN).

+ NUR 114 must be taken prior to, or concurrently with NUR 115.

NURSING PROGRAM CONTACT HOURS

	PN Curriculum	ADN Curriculum
Academic and Nursing Theory Contact Hours	480	660
Academic and Nursing Lab Contact Hours	195	255
Nursing Clinical Contact Hours	360	675
Total Program Contact Hours	1035	1590

ADN MOBILITY

In addition to the general admission requirements for the College and the nursing program, admission to the Associate Degree Nursing Mobility program requires:

- Non-nursing applicants to have an AAS degree and current licensure or certification as an Emergency Medical Services - Paramedic, Medical Assistant Technologist, Physical Therapist Assistant, Radiologic Technologist, or Surgical Technologist; and for Practical Nurses to have a certificate and current unencumbered or non-restricted license as a Practical Nurse in Alabama.
- One year of full-time work experience with direct patient care specific to the degree/certificate earned documented on company letterhead and signed by HR or employment administrator.
- Proof of CNA course completion for non-nursing applicants (certification not required).
- Unconditional admission to the College (see College catalog for requirements).
- A 2.5 grade point average (GPA) is calculated on completed academic core coursework, and current or previous Southern Union students must have a minimum 2.0 GPA or higher at SUSCC.
- Transfer students must enter SUSCC on clear academic status (cumulative 2.0 GPA).
- Official transcripts in the Records Office from ALL postsecondary institutions attended.
- Official score on ACT National or ACT Residual (minimum composite score of 18)
- Completion of all prerequisite general education courses (20 credit hours) with a minimum grade of "C": BIO 201, BIO 202, ENG 101, PSY 210, MTH 100 or higher, and SPH 106 or SPH 107.
- Application for ADN Mobility Program by the deadline.

First Semester

Courses	Theory	Lab	Clinical	Credit	Contact
NUR 209- Concepts for Healthcare Transition Students*	6	1	3	10	18
First Semester Total	6	1	3	10	18

Second Semester

Courses	Theory	Lab	Clinical	Credit	Contact
BIO 220- General Microbiology	2	2	0	4	6
NUR 211- Advanced Nursing Concepts	4	0	3	7	13
Second Semester Total	6	2	3	11	19

Third Semester

Courses	Theory	Lab	Clinical	Credit	Contact
NUR 221- Advanced Evidence-Based Clinical Reasoning	3	0	4	7	15
HUM (Ethics preferred)	3	0	0	3	3
Third Semester Total	9	0	3	12	18

A course grade of “C” or higher is required for all nursing and academic core courses.

*Students who have successfully completed NUR 209 will be awarded 15 additional non-traditional hours at the completion of the ADN Mobility Program. These hours will be documented on the SUSCC transcript as NUR 999.

APPROVED HUMANITIES ELECTIVES

In addition to Literature, disciplines include but are not limited to Area/Ethnic Studies, Art and Art History, Music and Music History, Philosophy, Ethics, Religious Studies, Theater, and Dance.

Southern Union offers the following classes that are transferable to four-year institutions.

- ART 100 Art Appreciation
- ENG 271 World Literature I
- ENG 272 World Literature II
- ENG 251 American Literature I
- ENG 252 American Literature II
- ENG 261 English Literature I
- ENG 262 English Literature II
- HUM 101 Intro to Humanities
- IDS 102 Ethics
- MUS 101 Music Appreciation
- REL 151 Survey of the Old Testament
- REL 152 Survey of the New Testament
- THR 120 Theatre Appreciation

GENERAL INFORMATION

COLLEGE ACTIVITIES

Students have the opportunity to participate in college-wide activities which serve to broaden their total academic experience. Activities vary from campus to campus and appeal to a variety of interests. Activities are described in the *College Catalog*, coordinated through the Student Services Office on the Wadley Campus, and posted on bulletin boards and/or announced in class.

College-sponsored clubs and organizations provide opportunities to share similar interests and work toward common goals. Please see the *College Catalog* for a list of approved organizations. You are encouraged to participate. Nursing students particularly may be interested in belonging to the Student Nurses' Association. A nursing faculty member serves as an advisor for this organization which participates at the local, state, and national levels. The faculty members encourage students to become active in professional organizations, and this is a great way to start!

NATIONAL STUDENT NURSES ASSOCIATION (NSNA)

The purpose of the NSNA is to foster the professional development of nursing students, participate in leadership activities, volunteer for community events, and stay informed about nursing trends and legislative issues that impact the nursing profession. Membership is encouraged but optional. Admission requirements include admission into the SUSCC Nursing Program and payment of local and national dues. More information can be obtained from a SUSCC SNA Advisor.

FUNDRAISING

The Dean of Health Sciences and Dean of Students must approve all fundraising activities *in advance*. Fundraising is allowed only by organizations/clubs that are officially recognized by the College. The senior officer of the organization should gain approval from the Program Director/Chair and then submit a written request (forms are available from the Health Sciences Division) to the Dean of Health Sciences. Upon approval by the Dean of Health Sciences, the request will be forwarded to the Dean of Students. Following approval from the Dean of Students, fundraising activities may proceed.

VISITOR POLICY

Southern Union State Community College welcomes visitors. Visitors are expected to abide by the college's regulations. Students are held responsible for the conduct of their guests. Children must be under the supervision of their parents and are not to attend classes.

TITLE IX

HARASSMENT POLICY

Southern Union State Community College is committed to protecting its students, staff, and visitors from harassment, intimidation, and exploitation as prohibited by Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and of Title VII (Section 703) of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Harassment includes but is not necessarily limited to slurs, jokes, or other verbal, graphic, or physical conduct relating to an individual's race, color, gender, religion, national origin, age, or disability. Harassment also includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal, graphic, or physical conduct of a sexual nature.

Sexual harassment refers to behavior of a sexual nature that interferes with the work or education of its victims and their co-workers or fellow students. Sexual harassment may involve the behavior of a person of either sex against a person of the opposite sex, when:

- submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment or educational opportunities;
- submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as the basis for employment or academic decisions affecting that individual;
- such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work or academic performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work or educational environment.

Harassment of employees or students by employers, other employees, other students, or non-employees is a violation of this policy. Any person who believes herself or himself to be subjected to such harassment, intimidation, and/or exploitation should first tell the person responsible for stopping the action. In addition, the person should contact a college official (faculty member or staff member) as promptly as possible after the harassment occurs. The college official will take appropriate action to resolve the complaint, which will include a referral to the Title IX Coordinator. When the Title IX Coordinator receives information about an incident, they will reach out to offer information about resources, rights, and procedural options as a member of the campus community. You are not required to respond to this outreach. Additional information can be found on the SUSCC website (<https://www.suscc.edu/about/title-ix>).

PREGNANCY ACCOMMODATIONS

In alignment with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Southern Union State Community College provides reasonable accommodations to students who are pregnant, have recently experienced childbirth, and/or have medical needs related to pregnancy or a pregnancy-related condition. A pregnant or parenting student experiencing related medical conditions may request accommodation through the College's ADA Coordinators. Additional information can be found on the SUSCC website ([suscc.edu](https://www.suscc.edu)).

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES (ADA)

Students with a documented disability are eligible to receive services for educational accommodations on all campuses. Students are required to meet with the ADA Coordinator on the campus where they attend classes and submit supporting documentation from their medical provider in order for the ADA Coordinator to determine eligibility for accommodations. Students who have documented disabilities and need special accommodations should contact:

- Joseph Halsey on the Opelika campus at (334) 745-6437 extension 5354;
- Tiffanie Character on the Wadley campus at (256) 395-2211 extension 5154; or
- Robin Brown on the Valley campus at (334) 756-4151 extension 5204.

For more information on services to our students with disabilities, please visit the SUSCC website at <https://www.suscc.edu/students/accessibility-services>.

COMMUNICATION CHANNELS / CHAIN OF COMMAND

Should a problem arise during the semester, you should first strive to solve it with the instructor or student involved. If no agreement is reached or dissatisfaction results, you should consult the course coordinator. If this does not solve the issue, you may make an appointment with the Nursing Department Chair. The Dean of Health Sciences may be consulted if the problem remains unresolved.

CHANGES TO PROGRAM - INFORMING STUDENTS

Policies and procedures are communicated to students by means of the Nursing Program Student Handbook, the course learning management system, the College Catalog, and/or the institutional website. The Nursing Program Student Handbook is revised regularly to provide current and accurate information about the program on the Southern Union website. Annual updates are required; however, published changes may occur during the academic year. Students are required to review the current handbook upon entry into the program and annually (Fall Semester).

Changes in program, policies, and procedures will be announced to each class by the instructors, and copies describing such changes will either be distributed to each student individually, emailed to SUSCC email accounts, and/or posted on the course learning management system (Canvas). Instructors and the Program Director will be available to answer questions regarding any changes.

NURSING STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

Student representatives have the primary role of liaising with faculty, staff, and students as a way of enhancing communication and student involvement in decision-making processes. Student representatives are invited to participate in the decision-making processes during nursing faculty meetings and other meetings surrounding special topics. Each student representative is required to attend 2 formal meetings per calendar year. Student representatives are also responsible for assisting with special events for individual nursing courses and participating in the Health Science Awards Ceremonies. Student representatives must assist with one Health Science Award Ceremony each year. Two (2) student representatives will be nominated by their classmates to represent each cohort. If a student representative does not progress in the nursing program with their class or it is determined that a student representative can no longer effectively fulfill their duties, a new representative may be appointed by the nursing faculty.

PARTICIPATION IN PROGRAM OF LEARNING: EVALUATIONS

Students have the opportunity to participate in the development and evaluation of the nursing program. The students contribute through end-of-semester evaluations and evaluations of the program and curriculum after program completion.

End-of-semester evaluations are distributed to students to solicit anonymous comments regarding the course, clinical sites, and instructors. Students are responsible for providing honest and professional feedback based on personal experience that will contribute to the overall program's effectiveness and the instructor's professional growth. Completing the end-of-semester evaluations in ACEMAPP is a course requirement. Course grades may be withheld until all semester evaluations have been completed. Students are asked to evaluate the entire curriculum/program at the completion of the program and six months to one year after graduation.

RESPONSIBILITY IN TEACHING AND LEARNING

The main purpose of instruction is to promote student learning. This means that teachers direct all matters dealing with courses. That does not mean that teachers bear sole responsibility for students' education. Students need to follow a teacher's guidance, study, do homework, and prepare for class/lab/simulation to master the information and skills being taught. Students cannot expect a good grade in a course without putting in several hours of studying for each hour of scheduled class time.

Extra-curricular activities, including jobs, will not affect teachers' expectations and should not interfere with students' preparation for classes. Teachers should use their expertise and experience to prepare and present the subject of a course in the best possible way.

Teachers (that is, *anyone* who teaches) will do their best to provide a disciplined yet comfortable and supportive learning environment. They will encourage questions and questioning, although students should remember that insight often comes from struggling with a problem rather than being given the answer.

The ultimate responsibility for learning lies with the student. Although faculty members will teach, guide, assist, and encourage learning, it is the responsibility of the student. Learning is hard work, and full-time students should consider "studenting" to be a full-time job. A college's priority is its students. While students pay tuition to attend school, the tuition provides the student access to the expertise of the faculty members.

HONESTY AND PLAGIARISM

The awarding of a college degree attests that an individual has demonstrated mastery of a significant body of knowledge and skills of substantive value to society. Any type of dishonesty in securing those credentials therefore invites serious sanctions. Examples of dishonesty include actual or attempted cheating, plagiarism*, or knowingly furnishing false information to any college employee.

**Plagiarism is defined as submitting anything for credit in one course that has already been submitted for credit in another course or copying any part of someone else's intellectual work – their ideas and/or words – published or unpublished, including that of other students, and portraying it as one's own. Proper quoting, using APA formatting (current edition), is required. Students must properly cite any quoted material.*

There will be no tolerance for plagiarism of any person's work, including that of another student. Work turned into faculty must be the original work of the particular student. This also includes giving false information to the faculty about a student's use of another student's past paperwork in a class, falsification of patient information, or falsification of clinical hours. If a student **knowingly** submits false information, he or she will receive a course failure. In addition, any form of cheating will not be permitted. If a student is found to be cheating during testing or on a required activity or commits plagiarism, he or she will receive a course failure.

COURSE LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM – WEB-BASED MATERIALS

Courses in the Health Sciences division are augmented using the course learning management system, Canvas. Students will be expected to access these materials as outlined in the course syllabus. For students who do not have a computer at home, computers and printing services are available in the Learning Resources Center. Students will be expected to acquire these resources.

CELL PHONES

Cell phones must be turned on silent or vibrate during class time. Communication by any inappropriate means of communication during class is strictly prohibited. If a student has a situation in which they expect a call during class time, then it is the student's responsibility to alert the faculty member. The student will be asked to step outside the class to take the call. If this situation occurs during a test, the student should arrange with the faculty member to monitor their phone. At no time should the student utilize a cell phone in a direct patient care area at clinical.

ELECTRONIC DEVICE USE

Clinical: The use of electronic devices in clinical settings is allowed, as long as the device is used as a clinical aid. **The taking of photographs, texting, using personal email, and the use of social media at clinical sites are strictly prohibited.** Wireless headphones (EX: air pods) are not permitted in the clinical setting. While these devices can be a great asset to the student, it is the student's responsibility to realize the boundaries needed with the use of these devices in order to maintain HIPAA compliance, as well as professionalism. SUSCC's HIPAA policy will apply to the use of electronic devices, while in the clinical setting.

Classroom: The audio taping of lectures may be allowed for studying purposes. Students are not allowed to retransmit lectures without the explicit consent of the instructor. Examples of transmission are but are not limited to posting lectures on websites (YouTube, Facebook, etc.), and dispersion of copies of recorded lectures. This includes both whole lectures and portions of lectures.

Skills lab/ Simulation Lab: Video recording of skills or simulation lab instruction is prohibited.

Computerized Testing / Exams: The possession of any electronic device other than a basic calculator during a test/examination will be considered a form of academic misconduct and will be subject to disciplinary action.

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Students are advised to use social media cautiously and to avoid disclosing any information that could be considered confidential patient information. Any disclosure, intentional or unintentional, of information that could lead to the identification of a patient will result in appropriate disciplinary actions up to suspension from the college. Removal of an individual's name, face, or image is not sufficient to protect identity or confidential information. The use of privacy settings that are available on many social networking sites does not guarantee that information will not appear in public and is thus not deemed sufficient to protect confidential patient information. Please review the HIPAA policy.

Students are **not** to make negative or disparaging or unprofessional remarks about fellow students, instructors, patients, patient visitors, clinical sites, or other healthcare professionals through social media. Any negative or disparaging remarks, intentional or unintentional, through social media, will be considered unprofessional and will be considered a form of misconduct. This type of misconduct will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action.

VIDEO RECORDING / PHOTOGRAPHY

The Southern Union Health Sciences Division develops and implements events and initiatives to promote the overall well-being of the college, to create awareness of the college's mission, history, and contributions to the region, and to foster positive relationships with prospective students, alumni, and friends of the college.

Public relations and marketing activities include but are not limited to, distributing press releases and news stories concerning college activities, developing and distributing publications regarding college mission and

programs, participating in community activities, and designing and implementing marketing material for print and electronic media.

Any student who wishes not to be video recorded or have photographs taken during events or initiatives to be publicized must notify the staff/faculty prior to the scheduled event date.

WITHDRAWAL

ADMINISTRATIVE WITHDRAWAL/DROP

A student may be dropped administratively from any course for:

1. Failure to complete college registration properly;
2. Falsification of application and/or records such as health insurance;
3. Failure to fulfill conditions of admission and/or registration;
4. Failure to comply with student conduct standards;
5. Failure to attend class; or
6. Three (3) level 1 professional behavior violations.

COURSE WITHDRAWAL

Students in good standing may elect to withdraw from a course prior to the published semester withdrawal date. It is the student's responsibility to formally withdraw from a course. The student will receive a 'W' for any course dropped. If a student elects to withdraw from NUR 114, the student must also withdraw from NUR 115. For purposes of reinstatement into the nursing program, a course withdrawal is considered a semester of non-progression. Please see the Academic Policies in the SUSCC College Catalog and/or the Reinstatement Policy in this handbook for additional information.

MEDICAL / CATASTROPHIC WITHDRAWAL

A medical or catastrophic withdrawal may be granted in circumstances that are outside of the student's control, in which a serious personal life situation prevents the student from attending classes, clinicals, or lab. Both withdrawal options are intended to be considered on a case-by-case basis and will require supporting documentation. To request a medical withdrawal from the Nursing Program, contact the Nursing Department Chair. See the Academic Policies in the SUSCC College Catalog for additional information regarding catastrophic withdrawals.

DISCIPLINE POLICY- EFFECTIVE JANUARY 2024

Fundamental attributes of ethical and professional behavior include but are not limited to honesty, integrity, and civility, as well as a demonstrated desire to learn, respect for the academic process, concern for the welfare of patients and their families, commitment to patient confidentiality, respect for the rights of others, emotional maturity, and self-discipline. Since the development of professional and practice behaviors is an integral part of education in nursing, demonstrating such conduct during your education is an academic matter. Professionalism is a cornerstone of a successful academic program, maintaining integrity and compassion in the delivery of health care, and building a collegial and conscientious health professions team.

Circumstances may arise during a student's course of study that call into question the capacity or commitment of the student to maintain this academic standard. SUSCC has the responsibility and authority to determine a student's ability to continue in their program of study. When a student accepts an offer of admission into the SUSCC Nursing Program, he or she commits to comply with all rules and expectations, including those

regarding professional and practice behaviors.

All nursing students are expected to demonstrate high standards of professional and clinical practice behaviors in all educational settings including, but not limited to the classroom, skills laboratory, simulation laboratory, all professional and clinical sites that are part of the learning program, and anytime in uniform.

A **behavior violation** is given for acts that are deemed to be inappropriate or when a student is not performing at the expected level. Depending on the nature, a behavior violation may be escalated to a higher level at the discretion of the program administrators. All behavior violations are placed in the student's file and are carried from semester to semester.

All written disciplinary actions received before January 2024 will be leveled based on the new discipline policy. All level 2 or level 3 behavior violations will be carried over to the new discipline policy.

-LEVEL 1 - Professional Behaviors: Each level 1 behavior violation will result in a student conference with the course faculty and will be documented in the student's nursing program file. Any student who receives a total of **three (3) level 1 professional behavior violations** while in the nursing program will be academically withdrawn from the nursing course(s) enrolled. Following program dismissal for three level 1 behavior violations, if a student is reinstated into the program, previous level 1 behavior violations are not carried over.

Level 1 Professional Behavior Violations Examples Include:

1. undocumented (unexcused) absence from scheduled exam
2. lack of punctuality to clinical/lab
3. distracting or insensitive behavior in class, lab, or clinical
4. unprepared for clinical/lab (assigned paperwork not complete, incomplete health records)
5. lack of adherence to published deadlines
6. violation of uniform guidelines
7. breach of simulation scenario confidentiality
8. failure to give appropriate/advanced notice of absence from assigned clinical/lab (see Clinical Tardiness and Absences on pg. 31)

-LEVEL 2- Clinical Practice Behaviors: Each level 2 behavior violation will result in a student conference with the course faculty and will be documented in the student's nursing program file. Any student who receives a total of **two (2) written level 2 clinical practice behavior violations** while in the nursing program will be dismissed from the program and given a failing grade (F) for the course enrolled.

Level 2 Clinical Practice Behavior Violations Examples Include:

1. failure to give advanced or any notice of absence from assigned clinical/lab
2. charting or reporting completion of nursing interventions or medical orders when in fact such action was not taken
3. failure to report errors

4. assuming responsibilities or performing skills in which the student has not been instructed, successfully validated, or those outside the scope of practice (Appendix C: Clinical Skills/Competencies)
5. performing invasive skills without instructor notification / appropriate supervision (pg. 27)
6. failure to address patient care needs
7. failure to demonstrate a professional demeanor (use of offensive language or gestures, negative attitude, lack of engagement/active participation)
8. written, verbal, or abusive/uncivil behavior toward others
9. violation of clinical facility policy
10. verified clinical facility/staff complaint
11. level 1 HIPAA violation
12. unsafe practice or behavior that results in potential harm to a patient, staff, or other student

-LEVEL 3 - Critical Behaviors: A level 3 behavior violation will result in a student conference with the course faculty and will be documented in the student's nursing program file. Any student who receives **one (1) written level 3 critical behavior violation** while in the nursing program will be dismissed from the program and given a failing grade (F) for the course enrolled.

Level 3 Critical Behavior Violations Examples Include:

1. unsafe practice or behavior that results in harm to a patient, staff, or another student
2. evidence that there is drug/alcohol use during scheduled school activities
3. diverting drugs in the clinical setting
4. negligence or refusal to perform nursing duties/act in the best interest of the patient
5. failure to demonstrate behaviors indicative of professional integrity or academic misconduct (cheating on exams, plagiarism, presenting others' work as own, etc.)
6. level 2 or 3 HIPAA violation
7. physically abusive behavior towards others

COURSE/CLINICAL FAILURE

A course/clinical failure may be given for level 2 and/or 3 behavior violations. Reinstatement into the program will be determined by the Admission Progression Committee. If reinstated, prior level 2 and/or 3 behavior violations will remain in the student's file and will be considered in all future performance reviews/evaluations.

Students who receive a course/clinical failure before the withdrawal date published in the yearly college calendar will receive a failing course grade (F) on their transcript at the time the grade is earned. The student will not be allowed to withdraw from the course. Students enrolled in two NUR courses during the same semester (EX: 114/115) who receive a course/clinical failure in one course will be withdrawn from the second NUR course.

Any student who receives a course/clinical failure must make an appointment to meet with the Nursing Department Chair to evaluate their current standing and eligibility to return to the nursing program.

GRADE APPEAL POLICY/ FORMAL DUE PROCESS PROCEDURE

The College has established a grade appeal procedure to be used if a student has a valid reason to believe that a grade he/she received for an examination, a written/oral presentation, a clinical, a lab, or a project is inaccurate or an inaccurate grade has influenced the final grade in the class. Formal appeals are accepted only when a student believes the instructor did not assign the grade correctly based on the written policy in the course syllabus or student handbook. Students may also appeal the final course grade if he/she believes the final grade is inaccurate due to a calculation error.

The student must demonstrate proof that the instructor did not follow the course syllabus/program policy, or that a calculation error occurred. The burden of proof is the responsibility of the student to appeal the grade. Appeals unrelated to syllabus/policy guidelines and/or calculation errors will not be considered.

The Academic Appeal Policy and Appeal Procedure steps are outlined in detail in the SUSCC College Catalog on the SUSCC website.

CLASSROOM

CLASSROOM INTERACTION

All interactions within the classroom are expected to be honest and respectful. Teachers set the tone and demeanor of their classes. Discussion and questions are encouraged when appropriate. Questions and comments by students should be thoughtful and relevant.

Dress should be appropriate for a professional learning environment, avoiding overly revealing or disruptive attire.

Unsanctioned talking, eating, sleeping, and reading unrelated material during a class will be considered rude and disruptive. Students will be asked to leave the classroom if rude or disruptive to the learning environment. Students who are asked to leave must meet with the faculty member, Nursing Department Chair, and/or Dean of Health Sciences before he or she will be allowed to return to class.

Instructors will begin and end class promptly in accordance with the published class schedule. Students are expected to arrive on time and not leave or prepare to leave until the class has been dismissed. Faculty members may close the door and not allow students to enter a class until a class break.

ATTENDANCE POLICY (CLASSROOM)

Students are expected to attend each class session, arrive on time, and remain for the entire class session. Faculty will record attendance from the first day of the semester. Students in all classes, regardless of instructional modalities, will be required to complete an attendance verification activity or assignment. Excessive absences, regardless of the reason or circumstance, may interfere with the student's ability to successfully complete the requirements of the course. In such cases, the student should withdraw from the class before the last date to withdraw with a grade of 'W'. Withdrawal from class may affect eligibility for federal financial aid. Students should contact the Financial Aid Office for information *prior to withdrawing from class*.

When a student is absent from class, the student is responsible for all material covered in class and for any assignments made in class. The instructor is not required or responsible for notifying a student of missed work. Classroom material can be found in the course syllabus and in the Canvas learning modules.

Extenuating circumstances: An absence may be excused due to extenuating circumstances. Excused absences include, but may not be limited to, the following reasons:

- Jury duty/court appearance
- Death in the immediate family
- Illness (documented)
- College-sponsored functions
- Other reasons deemed appropriate by the instructor

When such an absence occurs, students are responsible for providing official documentation of the reason for the absence to the instructor. Make-up work, if allowed as stated in the course syllabus, may be accepted.

A student **may** be administratively withdrawn from any course for failure to attend class(es) when the student has missed more than 20% of the total number of hours that the class meets. The number of absences resulting in administrative withdrawal may differ in programs that lead to board licensure or certification will be clearly stated in the course syllabus.

Please see the SUSCC policy as it relates to absences due to active military duty.

COURSE SYLLABI

Each nursing course has a syllabus which is the student-teacher agreement for that specific course. The syllabi will be available online through the Canvas learning platform. The syllabus contains the course objectives, each of which must be achieved to pass the course; the requirements of the course; and the evaluation methods. **It is the responsibility of the student to read and fully understand the contents of the course syllabi at the beginning of the semester for each course enrolled.** If you have questions or need clarification, make an appointment with the faculty member. Syllabi are projections of activities that will take place over several months; however, teachers may modify activities to fit unforeseen circumstances. Changes will be announced in class and/or provided in writing via the course management system Canvas.

COURSE EVALUATION / GRADES

A minimum grade of “C” in theory (75 or above) and “satisfactory” clinical performance is required to successfully complete the course.

A=Excellent (90–100); B=Good (80-89); C=Average (75–79); D=Poor (60–74); F=Failure (59–below).

Individual exam grades are not rounded to the next higher grade.

A **PASSING** overall course grade of 0.5 or higher is raised to the next whole number. For example, if an overall course grade is 89.6, then an A will be recorded for that course grade.

A **FAILING** overall course grade of 0.5 or higher grade will not be rounded to a passing letter grade. For example, if an overall course grade is 74.9, then a D will be recorded for that course grade.

Exam questions within the Nursing Program may include but are not limited to the following: multiple choice, short answer, matching, fill in the blank, order ranking, drag and drop, select all that apply, scenario-based, and essay.

Students must pass all components of the course to progress to the next course.

Any student who is unsuccessful in a nursing course must make an appointment to meet with a member of the Health Science Admissions team to evaluate their current program standing and eligibility to return to the nursing program.

COMPUTERIZED TESTING POLICY

Students will need to arrive at the computer laboratory or designated location at the designated time. Students are not permitted to enter the testing area prior to the beginning of the scheduled testing period. No food or drinks are allowed in the lab. Students may only bring a pencil and a basic calculator. If paper is needed, faculty members will supply you with a blank sheet to be handed in at the completion of the test.

Smartphones, smart watches, tablets, and/or cellular phones are prohibited during testing and should not be accessible. The possession of any electronic device other than a basic calculator during a test/examination will be considered a form of cheating and will be treated as academic misconduct. Belongings must be left in the classroom during exams. The students are allowed only to access the test in progress. All exams are proctored. No other programs or internet applications should be open on the taskbar or used at this time. Once the test is complete and submitted, the student may review the test if allowed by the faculty member. Once the test is complete, the student will end the testing session and exit the computer laboratory. Students may not check email, surf the web, or go to other websites during or after the test.

Students attending the Wadley campus may be required to travel to take tests in the Health Sciences computer lab on the Opelika Campus.

Students experiencing extenuating circumstances immediately prior to any scheduled exam are responsible for contacting their course faculty prior to taking the exam to request other testing arrangements. Once an exam is attempted, the score is final.

MAKE-UP TESTS

If unable to take an exam at the scheduled date and time due to extenuating circumstances (defined on pg. 23), the student is expected to notify the instructor **prior** to the exam. If a student fails to notify the instructor prior to the scheduled exam time or is unable to provide documentation of an extenuating circumstance, the student will receive a level 1 behavior violation. Make-up exams are not guaranteed to the student. Make-up tests may include fill-in-the-blank, essays, and listing. Regardless of the circumstances, students may take only one make-up test per semester. If a student misses more than one exam during the semester, they will be administratively withdrawn from the course.

HESI EXAM SCORING

HESI computerized exams are used for final exams in each course. The “recommended” score for HESI exams is 900 or above. Grades for HESI exams administered in the SUSCC Nursing Program are scaled by the 3- or 4-digit HESI Score accordingly:

HESI Raw Score:	Grade is:
1000 or greater	100%
975 - 999	95%
950 – 974	90%
925 – 949	85%
900 – 924	80%
880 – 899	78%
860 – 879	76%
850 – 859	75%
840 – 849	74%
820 – 839	72%
800 – 819	70%

HESI Raw Score:	Grade is:
775 – 799	68%
750 – 774	65%
725 – 749	63%
700 – 724	60%
650 – 699	55%
600 – 649	50%
500 – 599	40%
499 or less	10%

TEST REVIEW

Test results will not be reviewed except immediately after the test is given or as scheduled by the faculty member. Students will not be allowed to review tests at the end of the semester to challenge question answers for points. Students who wish to challenge a test question must do so in writing (via email) **within 1 business day** following the exam. Students who challenge test questions must provide the course faculty with documentation from a reputable source supporting the reasoning for the challenge.

ACCESS TO INSTRUCTORS/ TUTORING

Students will be able to meet with their instructors during designated office hours/tutoring hours. Office hours are posted outside each faculty member's office and/or in the course syllabus. Students must schedule appointments with faculty at a time that is mutually convenient for both students and faculty. Appointments should be kept by both parties; if circumstances prevent this, the person unable to make the appointment should contact the other and attempt to reschedule. Students who are reinstated into the program should meet with their current course faculty on an ongoing basis throughout the semester. The full-time nursing faculty for the current course will serve as the student mentor.

CLINICAL / LAB / SIMULATION

LEGAL RESPONSIBILITIES IN CLINICAL SETTING

Nursing is one of the professions regulated by the legislative bodies of each state or jurisdiction of the United States to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the public. The laws are designed to prevent incompetent persons from practicing the professions by establishing minimum standards to be met for licensure.

As part of their educational program, student nurses are entrusted with the responsibility of providing certain kinds of nursing care to clients/patients. In several court decisions, the courts have taken the position that anyone who performs duties customarily performed by professional nurses is held to the standards of professional nurses. Thus, a student nurse is held to the standard of a professional nurse and will be personally liable for negligence if injury results.

It is the responsibility of the clinical instructor to determine that the student nurse has demonstrated reasonable competence to render safe nursing interventions independently or with supervision. **All students must consult with the clinical instructor prior to performing any invasive procedures.** See Appendix C: Clinical Skills/Competencies. If the clinical instructor's evaluation of the student nurse's behavior or health status indicates that the student is unlikely to provide safe nursing care, the clinical instructor has the legal responsibility to deny, *and will deny*, the student nurse access to clinical learning experience.

Clinical Rotations/Preceptorship: Health Sciences students are required to complete clinical hours in a healthcare facility and simulation center, and those experiences are educational in nature and are designed to develop skills necessary for entry-level competencies. Students are not permitted to concurrently work and complete preceptorship/clinical hours or receive compensation for participation in preceptorship/clinical rotations unless the student is enrolled in a formal apprenticeship contract with the college and employer. Students are not promised, nor should they expect a job at the health care facility as a result of participation in clinical experiences at a health care facility. Students will be given the appropriate grade for the clinical action dictating the refusal by a clinical agency.

Clinical/Preceptorship Hours: Students are expected to attend clinical for the duration of the scheduled clinical/preceptorship shift. Students are not permitted to leave the clinical site for meals unless specific instructions were given prior to the clinical experience.

Students are strongly discouraged from working during the 8 hours immediately prior to a scheduled clinical shift. If at any time the clinical faculty feels or determines that a student is unable to successfully and safely participate in a scheduled clinical rotation, the student will be dismissed from the clinical site.

Student Dismissal: The clinical agency(ies) reserves the right to dismiss a student from clinical due to unprofessional or unethical behaviors. Any time the student cannot meet the clinical requirements of the clinical agency the student will be dismissed from the Nursing Program and administratively withdrawn from all health science courses at the time the event occurs. Any nursing student who is dismissed by a clinical agency is not eligible for admission into a SUSCC Health Science Program at any time.

Representation as a Student: Students may not represent themselves as a nursing student or engage in client/patient care except as part of an assigned, planned learning activity in a practice/clinical setting.

Southern Union is contractually obligated to comply with all immunizations, facility orientations, and other clinical requirements set forth by agencies used for clinical rotations which are subject to change.

**UNIFORM GUIDELINES
FOR STUDENTS STARTING THE
PROGRAM SUMMER 2025 OR
PRIOR**



HEALTH SCIENCES

Uniform: Clean and wrinkle-free Caribbean blue scrubs with embroidered SUSCC logo (above) on right chest. Official Southern Union State Community College ID badges are required to be worn on the left chest at all times during clinical. Pants should not be frayed on the bottom or dragging the ground. Leggings are not permitted. Shirts worn under scrub tops should be a neutral color (solid white, Caribbean blue, black, or gray). Lab coats, if desired, may be Caribbean blue, black, or solid white with the ID badge visible. For women who do not wish to wear pants: Dress/skirt length should be no shorter than the top of the knee with appropriate white socks or hose.

ID Badge: The official Southern Union State Community College name badge is to be worn on the left side of the chest on the uniform at all times while in the clinical agency. Students who do not wear their ID badge will be sent home from clinical. Only the SUSCC badge should be present on the badge holder/badge reel. The badge holder/badge reel must be professional and nonporous to allow for disinfecting.

Shoes: Clean and cleanable, closed-toe nursing or athletic shoes which are to be worn only for clinical. Closed-heel shoes are preferred. Open-heeled shoes must have a heel strap. If unsure about shoe selection, have your shoe approved prior to clinical. No boots.

Jewelry: Limited to wedding rings (ring with stone can be worn if hospital policy allows); watch with a second-hand, and small, single, non-dangling earrings. Earrings may be worn only in pierced earlobes. Facial piercings are not permitted. Jewelry may not be worn in any other area of the body that may be pierced and visible to others.

Perfume: Perfume or cologne shall not be worn in the clinical area.

Hair: Clean and confined so that it does not interfere with patient care. Hair must be kept off the shoulders and collar. Hair color must be naturally occurring to humans and style should be within accepted societal norms. Students may not wear hair decorations to the clinical setting such as jewelry and or other articles not found naturally occurring in hair. Headbands must be no wider than 2 inches in diameter. Scarves, hats, and caps are not permitted.

Facial Hair: Facial hair must be clean, neat, and trimmed. False facial hair, such as adhesive mustaches, beards, or eyebrows, is not allowed.

Makeup: Heavy makeup and false eyelashes are not allowed. Makeup should be modest and appear natural to maintain a professional appearance when interacting with patients.

Nails: Natural, short, and clean nails only. No clear or colored polish is allowed. Artificial nails, nail tips, and gel nails are not permitted.

Personal: Students are expected to maintain necessary personal hygiene including bathing daily, shampooing hair, and using underarm deodorant. Underclothing (including underwear and bras) must not be visible through the uniform.

Tattoos: Tattoos that could be offensive to others must be covered.

Other: A professional appearance is expected. Jeans, T-shirts, shorts, hoodies, sweatshirts, or other casual clothing may not be worn at any time at a clinical agency, or while representing SUSCC at various meetings.

****Students must also comply with all policies specified by clinical agencies****

UNIFORM GUIDELINES FOR STUDENTS STARTING THE PROGRAM FALL 2025 OR LATER



Uniform: Clean and wrinkle-free **NAVY BLUE** scrubs with **SU NURSING logo** (above) on right chest. Official Southern Union State Community College ID badges are required to be worn on the left chest at all times during clinical. Pants should not be frayed on the bottom or dragging the ground. Leggings are not permitted. Shirts worn under scrub tops should be **NAVY BLUE**. Lab coats/nursing jackets, if desired, must be **NAVY BLUE** with the **SU NURSING logo** on the right chest. For women who do not wish to wear pants: Dress/skirt length should be no shorter than the top of the knee with appropriate white socks or hose.

ID Badge: The official Southern Union State Community College name badge is to be worn on the left side of the chest on the uniform at all times while in the clinical agency. Students who do not wear their ID badge will be sent home from clinical. Only the SUSCC badge should be present on the badge holder/badge reel. The badge holder/badge reel must be professional and nonporous to allow for disinfecting.

Shoes: Clean and cleanable, closed-toe nursing or athletic shoes which are to be worn only for clinical. Closed-heel shoes are preferred. Open-heeled shoes must have a heel strap. If unsure about shoe selection, have your shoe approved prior to clinical. No boots.

Jewelry: Limited to wedding rings (ring with stone can be worn if hospital policy allows); watch with a second-hand, and small, single, non-dangling earrings. Earrings may be worn only in pierced earlobes. Facial piercings are not permitted. Jewelry may not be worn in any other area of the body that may be pierced and visible to others.

Perfume: Perfume or cologne shall not be worn in the clinical area.

Hair: Clean and confined so that it does not interfere with patient care. Hair must be kept off the shoulders and collar. Hair color must be naturally occurring to humans and style should be within accepted societal norms. Students may not wear hair decorations to the clinical setting such as jewelry and or other articles not found naturally occurring in hair. Headbands must be no wider than 2 inches in diameter. Scarves, hats, and caps are not permitted.

Facial Hair: Facial hair must be clean, neat, and trimmed. False facial hair, such as adhesive mustaches, beards, or eyebrows, is not allowed.

Makeup: Heavy makeup and false eyelashes are not allowed. Makeup should be modest and appear natural to maintain a professional appearance when interacting with patients.

Nails: Natural, short, and clean nails only. No clear or colored polish is allowed. Artificial nails, nail tips, and gel nails are not permitted.

Personal: Students are expected to maintain necessary personal hygiene including bathing daily, shampooing hair, and using underarm deodorant. Underclothing (including underwear and bras) must not be visible through the uniform.

Tattoos: Tattoos that could be offensive to others must be covered.

Other: A professional appearance is expected. Jeans, T-shirts, shorts, hoodies, sweatshirts, or other casual clothing may not be worn at any time at a clinical agency, or while representing SUSCC at various meetings.

****Students must also comply with all policies specified by clinical agencies****

UNIFORM CLOSET

The National Student Nurses Association (NSNA) has established a free uniform closet on the Opelika campus for all students to donate or take uniforms as needed. Students can ask any staff/faculty for access to the closet during business hours.

HEALTH POLICY

Students entering any program in the Health Sciences Division must be aware that they may be exposed to various contagious diseases during their clinical education and career. Precautions to be taken are outlined in the introductory patient care courses. Additional information may be provided by each clinical facility. Students are required to use available protective devices and to use standard (universal) precautions. Refusal by a student to provide patient care for an assigned patient will result in a level 3 behavior violation.

Students, upon diagnosis of communicable disease(s) (i.e., chickenpox, measles, flu, COVID, etc.), must contact the clinical instructor immediately. Based on current medical knowledge, the instructor will make the judgment of communicability and advise the student regarding attendance.

Students in all healthcare programs must comply with Public Law #102-141, Section 633, and “The Alabama Infected Healthcare Worker Management Act.” The law requires that the HIV or HBV-infected healthcare worker report to the State Health Officer his/her condition within 30 days of the time he/she is aware of his/her infection. The infected healthcare worker must realize that any healthcare provider providing care to an infected healthcare worker must notify the State Health Officer of the infected status within seven days of the time he/she diagnoses or provides such care.

UNIVERSAL PRECAUTIONS

Safety procedures and universal precautions are covered as they relate to the content area and are reinforced throughout the duration of the program. It is the student’s responsibility to seek guidance from an appropriate resource if they have any doubts, questions, or concerns regarding the correct procedure.

INJURY DURING CLINICAL

The nature of healthcare education is such that one may be exposed to potential health and/or safety hazards while participating in clinical rotations. Southern Union State Community College, its employees, officials, agents, and representatives are not responsible for any injury, loss, damage, or death that may result or arise from student experiences in the clinical agency. If a student is injured at a clinical agency while participating in clinical activities, the clinical agency is not responsible for providing workman’s compensation benefits.

If you are injured during clinical experiences (needle stick, back injury, etc.), you should:

1. Notify your clinical instructor or course faculty immediately.
2. Report to the nearest hospital’s Emergency Department to be evaluated by a healthcare provider.
3. Complete an appropriate incident report/or variance report required by the agency.
4. Complete an incident report on the SUSCC website- Students: Campus Police: Submit an Online Incident Report.

Students who incur a needle stick or any other type of direct risk exposure with a patient may be advised by the clinical agency to begin immediate treatment for HIV. For the most effective results, treatment must be started within a few hours of exposure. The cost for laboratory tests and medications (until test results are obtained)

may be as high as \$1000.00.

The student is financially responsible for any illness or injury occurring during clinical rotations; therefore, it is required that students have health, hospitalization, and accident insurance. During clinical rotations, students are not employees of the clinical agency or the college. If injured during clinical rotations, students are not entitled, and will not receive, workman's compensation from either the institution or the health care facility.

CLINICAL ABSENCES/TARDINESS

All college laboratory, simulation, and clinical experiences are considered clinical hours. Requirements for satisfactory completion of clinical hours are listed in each course syllabus. It is expected that the student will assume responsibility for punctuality and regular clinical attendance.

CLINICAL TARDINESS

- Tardy: If the student is to be tardy (arrive 1-15 minutes after the published clinical start time), the assigned clinical instructor for that day should be notified as soon as possible. Messages/notifications via classmates will not be accepted. Students who are tardy and who do not follow the appropriate procedure for prior notification of the clinical instructor will receive a written level 1 behavior violation.
- Late: If the student is to be late (arrive 16 minutes or more after the published clinical start time), the assigned clinical instructor for that day should be notified as soon as possible. Messages/notifications via classmates will not be accepted. Any student who is late is not permitted to remain in the clinical setting and the clinical hours missed are considered unexcused. Students who provide prior notification will be given a level 1 behavior violation. Students who do not provide prior notification will be given a level 2 behavior violation.

Arrival	Prior notification	Result
TARDY: 1-15 minutes after published start time	YES	student/faculty conference
	NO	Level 1 behavior violation
LATE: 16 minutes or more after published start time	YES	Level 1 behavior violation, not permitted to remain at clinical, unexcused clinical hours
	NO	Level 2, not permitted to remain at clinical, considered an unexcused clinical absence

* Extenuating circumstances with documentation will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

CLINICAL ABSENCES

When it is impossible for the student to attend a clinical session due to an extenuating circumstance (defined on pg. 23), illness, or unforeseen event, it is the student's responsibility to contact the assigned clinical instructor prior to the beginning of the clinical experience. Contact must be made via text/email/telephone message to the assigned clinical instructor. Messages/notifications via classmates will not be accepted. Students who are absent and send a notification to the clinical instructor after the published clinical start time, or fail to send notification, will receive a written level 2 behavior violation. Documentation supporting the reason for the absence must be provided to the course coordinator upon return to campus.

All absences, even when made up, count toward the student's total clinical absence hours.

Upon return to campus, documentation for the absence must be provided by the student. Absences without written supporting documentation will be considered unexcused. The nursing faculty may request that the Admission Progression Committee review documentation submitted by the student to determine if the

absence(s) should be considered excused or unexcused. Students who have unexcused/undocumented absences exceeding 10% of the total clinical hours for the course prior to the published college semester withdrawal date will be withdrawn (W) from the course. After the published semester withdrawal date, students who have unexcused/undocumented absences exceeding 10% of the total clinical hours for the course will be withdrawn (W) if their current course grade is equal to 75 or greater. Students with a current course grade below 75 will receive a course failure (F).

The student may submit an appeal requesting that *unexcused* absence(s) be reviewed by the Health Sciences Admission Progression Committee. The student is responsible for submitting documentation for the absence(s) to the committee for review. During the appeal process, the student may continue to participate in class and lab but is not permitted to participate in clinical rotations. The decision of the committee is final and is considered the appeal for the student.

Students who have *excused* absences exceeding 20% of the course clinical hours may be awarded an incomplete (I) or withdrawn (W) from the course based on the weeks remaining in the semester, clinical makeup availability, and individual circumstances.

MAKEUP LAB/CLINICAL TIME

All missed lab time must be made up in the skills lab with independent practice. Missed clinical time must be made up on the clinical day and at the location designated by the instructor. Failure to complete all hours of lab /clinical may result in a grade of I (incomplete) for the course and failure to progress to the next nursing course until lab/clinical time is made up.

CLINICAL SKILLS LABORATORY POLICY

The student will be responsible for demonstrating competency of specified skills in the skills lab. The instructor will teach, demonstrate, and supervise the practice of the skill. The student is responsible for required readings and review of videos and handouts as applicable. The student should make arrangements for additional practice of the skill if needed.

The student is responsible for logging skills performed during the skills validation into the designated online platform. The student will attempt to check off the specified skill through one-on-one observation by an instructor. The skills validation will be determined to be either successful (S) or unsuccessful (U). Evaluation will be based on the instructor's final assessment.

The student will get three (3) opportunities to successfully complete each skill. The student cannot repeat a check-off attempt on the same day as a failed attempt. If unsuccessful on the first try, the student must do the following:

- Review of skill in the textbook and/or video review (if applicable)
- Practice in the lab (as permits) and outside of lab time as needed
- Demonstration to another student who has previously checked off
- Arrange a second check-off attempt with the course coordinator

If unsuccessful on the second try, the student must do the following:

- Review of skill in the textbook and/or video review (if applicable)
- Practice in the lab (as permits) and outside of lab time as needed

- Demonstration to faculty member
- Arrange a third (final) check-off attempt with the course coordinator

Students will have three opportunities in the skills lab to demonstrate competency. Failure to demonstrate competency with the skill after the third attempt will result in course non-progression and withdrawal (W) from the current nursing course. If a student is absent from a scheduled check-off validation for any reason, that check-off attempt is forfeited and a makeup will not be provided.

CLINICAL EVALUATION

Purpose: The purpose of the clinical evaluation is to ascertain that the student is continuing to work towards the program's clinical objectives and track completion of skills deemed necessary for the competent practice of nursing. Each clinical day, students will complete a daily clinical report (DCR) in the designated online platform based on their clinical experience of that day. Students will also log clinical skills and may be requested to complete additional clinical assignments.

Students should complete the DCR at the end of the clinical shift before leaving the clinical site. Once the student completes the evaluation, it is sent to the clinical faculty for review and feedback. Failure to submit the DCR within 24 hours of the clinical end time will result in a level 1 behavior violation.

Behavior violations may be given for acts that are deemed to be inappropriate or when a student is not performing at the expected level. Behavior violations are placed in the student's file and are carried from one semester to another. See the Discipline Policy on pgs. 19-21.

CLINICAL ASSIGNMENTS (WRITTEN AND/OR DIGITAL)

Requirements for satisfactory completion of clinical assignments vary with each nursing course. See each course syllabus for requirements. Clinical assignments may be written and/or digital in nature and are to be submitted on the determined due date. Assignments that are not submitted by the due date will be considered a level 1 behavior violation.

HIPAA – HEALTH INSURANCE PORTABILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY ACT OF 1996

Title II of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 requires the protection of all individually identifiable health information. This protected health information must be kept confidential whether electronic, paper, or oral. In order to satisfy HIPAA compliance, the Southern Union State Community College Health Sciences Programs requires all electronic devices to be password protected, and all information to be de-identified. Due to the seriousness of this policy, HIPAA violations will be considered a severe offense and therefore the consequences will be severe.

CONFIDENTIALITY/ HIPAA

All patient/client information is confidential. Protecting patient confidentiality is the law. The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) of 1996 came into effect in April 2003. Noncompliance can result in monetary, civil, and criminal penalties.

Southern Union State Community College Health Science division takes HIPAA violations very seriously. In order to help preserve patient confidentiality, levels of HIPAA violations have been developed and will be strictly enforced for every student who is enrolled in Health Science courses at Southern Union. This policy consists of 3 levels of HIPAA violations with repercussions outlined in each level.

LEVEL 1: Constitutes an act of negligence.

Examples of a level 1 HIPAA violation include but are not limited to:

- Leaving patient information unattended.
- Turning in written assignments with a patient's name attached.
- Sharing passwords with other classmates.
- Not signing off of a computer in the clinical setting.
- Not password-protecting any personal device that is used to record patient information

The Level 1 HIPAA violation will result in a student being given a level 2 behavior violation and counseling by the instructor. This offense will stay in the student's permanent file.

LEVEL 2: Repeat violations of a level 1 HIPAA incident within the same semester or subsequent in a Health Science program (does not have to be the same incident) OR intentional violation of the SUSCC confidentiality/ HIPAA policy.

Examples of a level 2 violation include but are not limited to:

- unauthorized access to patient records
- the discussion of the patient's, the patient's family, and or visitor's information with others not involved in the patient's care
- discussing patient, patient's family, and or visitor's information on social media sites
- discussing the patient's, the patient's family, and or visitor's information whereas others not involved in the direct care of the patient may overhear your conversation
- sharing/discussing the identity of a patient, the patient's family, and or visitors outside of the clinical setting, even if not discussing information regarding their care

A level 2 HIPAA violation will result in the student receiving a course failure (F) for the course that the offense occurred. Additionally, the student will be academically withdrawn from all health science courses. The student will have to go through the reinstatement process for possible readmission to the program. This offense will stay in the student's permanent file.

LEVEL 3: Additional violation of the SUSCC Confidentiality/ HIPAA policy after already receiving a Level 2 violation OR a malicious offense used to cause harm to a person, or used for personal gain

GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR STUDENTS REGARDING HIPAA COMPLIANCE:

- students should not discuss patient/client information with anyone except for clinical personnel and those in the Health Science program who are involved in your education and adhere to the same confidentiality (e.g., faculty, graduate colleagues)
- client records should never leave the clinical agency
- students should never save patient/client sensitive information (with identifying information) on their computers
- e-mail correspondence with faculty should also be treated confidentially and identifying information about patients/clients should not be included
- all documentation related to clinical clients must be treated as a legal document and confidentiality respected and maintained
- client names should not be included in clinical paperwork, case presentations, or notes
- photocopying of client records is **NOT** permitted in any clinical setting
- records should not have client's names or initials when turned in for clinical paperwork
- students should NEVER discuss ANY information, no matter how insignificant it may seem, on any social media site
- for more information regarding HIPAA please visit <https://www.hhs.gov/hipaa/index.html>
- all violations of the SUSCC confidentiality/ HIPAA will remain active for two years after the incident or until the completion of the currently enrolled program (whichever is longer) regardless of the program
- active violations will transfer to any Health Science program from any other Health Science program

SIMULATION CENTER OVERVIEW

The Health Sciences Simulation Lab is located in TB1 (Technical Building 1) near the Student Union. Parking can be located at the Lake Condry side entrance. The simulation lab provides an active learning environment and replicates the healthcare settings in which the students practice. Students may be involved in a teaching/learning simulation or an active scenario, in which students practice and develop skills through simulated hands-on learning experiences. The simulation lab is considered a clinical site; therefore, all clinical/laboratory policies are applicable to the simulation lab.

SIMULATION CENTER GENERAL GUIDELINES

- Wear your school uniform including your name badge.
- Bring your **COMPLETED** prep work as assigned. This is required for simulation entry. Failure to do so will prevent you from completing your simulated clinical experience.
- Be punctual. Arrivals later than 15 minutes will not be allowed to complete the simulated clinical experience.
- Be prepared. In any given simulation, you may need your stethoscope, information gained from completing your prep work, and previous skills learned.
- Cell phones should be put away unless you are using uCentral or something pertaining to the simulation. Please turn off or put on vibrate.
- Don't be disrespectful or disruptive. If you are not in the active scenario, please remain quiet and learn from your peers.

SIMULATION CENTER CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

During your simulated clinical experience at the Southern Union Simulation Center, you will be both an active participant in simulated scenarios and an observer. The objectives of the simulated clinical experience are to educate nursing students to better assess and improve their performances in evolving healthcare situations. The simulated clinical experience is designed to challenge the nursing student's response and judgment in a controlled environment and develop clinical reasoning.

In order to preserve the realism of the scenarios used in the Southern Union simulation center and to provide an equitable learning experience for each student, all persons using the simulation center will be required to maintain confidentiality regarding their experience. The simulation center confidentiality policy applies to the simulation itself, as well as all patient information made available to the students. You are also expected to maintain strict confidentiality regarding both your and others' performance, whether seen in real-time, on video or otherwise communicated to you.

You will be discussing the scenarios during the debriefing, but we believe that “all that takes place in the simulation environment, stays in the simulation environment”. Due to copyrights, and to maintain optimal simulation experiences for the other learners who will be following you in the center, you are to maintain strict confidentiality regarding the specific scenarios, as well as the events of your simulation experience. A breach of confidentiality will result in disciplinary actions see the Discipline Policy outlined on pgs. 19-21.

SIMULATION CENTER VIDEO RECORDING

Simulations may be recorded by SUSCC and used for purposes including, but not limited to debriefing, faculty review, educational, research, public relations, advertisement, promotional, and/or fundraising activities. **Any student who wishes not to be video recorded must notify the simulation staff/faculty upon arrival at the simulation center.**

NURSING APPRENTICESHIP

The purpose of the apprenticeship program is to allow students who have successfully completed the first semester of the nursing program (NUR 112) the opportunity to learn and improve their skills and be rewarded for their work. Apprenticeships allow employers another training and recruitment pipeline to connect with high-quality workers.

Eligible nursing students selected for apprenticeship are employed by a healthcare facility that has an apprenticeship agreement with Southern Union State Community College (SUSCC). Student nurse apprentices are paired one-on-one with a facility journey worker (mentor) for work and clinical hours and are paid for hours worked as an employee and hours performed as a student.

Additional information will be provided by the healthcare facility each semester during the NUR 112 class. Students may only enter the SUSCC apprenticeship at the beginning of the second semester (NUR 113).

STUDENT HEALTH INFORMATION/ CLINICAL RECORDS

ACEMAPP: CLINICAL RECORD PLATFORM

All student health records should be uploaded by the student into ACEMAPP ([acemapp.org](https://www.acemapp.org)). The student is responsible for keeping their annual (12-month) ACEMAPP subscription and all health records current. Students can access their school health records through ACEMAPP therefore, the school will not provide copies to clinical agencies after the student graduates.

Please allow up to 2 business days for documents to be reviewed and approved in ACEMAPP by the Health Sciences Admissions Assistant. If a clinical document is denied, a comment will be provided in the student's ACEMAPP account. Documents are not reviewed after business hours or on weekends.

SUSCC requirements: Students enrolled in the nursing program must complete all the SUSCC health requirements prior to registering for a nursing class. The health record must be in date for the entire semester. For example, if a TB skin test expires on October 12, the student must repeat the test before he or she can register for the fall semester. **There are no exceptions to this rule.** Students who fail to complete the health records by the last day to register for the semester will be considered a semester of non-progression and must reapply for admission into the program.

Clinical Facility Requirements: Clinical facility orientation documents are assigned for students to complete on the ACEMAPP platform once the clinical schedule has been determined. It is each student's responsibility to ensure that their ACEMAPP account is current (Student Dashboard View). Instructions on how to check your ACEMAPP account can be found at <https://collaboration.acemapp.org/kb/57?q=requirements>. Information on sharing your drug screen and background check reports can be found at <https://collaboration.acemapp.org/kb/tag/20/article/120>. Students with incomplete ACEMAPP accounts will be denied access to the clinical site(s) and will receive a level 1 behavior violation and an unexcused absence.

Questions about your ACEMAPP account can be directed to the Health Sciences Admissions Assistant (ext. 5547).

RELEASE OF CLINICAL INFORMATION

Health Sciences students must give Southern Union State Community College permission to release information regarding clinical and classroom performance to clinical agencies, including those with whom the student may apply for employment. Students must also give permission for required clinical documentation such as but not limited to the following: immunizations, TB skin tests, CPR, drug screens, and criminal background checks to be available to the clinical agencies as requested.

REQUIRED IMMUNIZATIONS

Clinical affiliation agreements between SUSCC and our partnering clinical agencies detail the terms under which each clinical site will provide on-site student educational experiences. Provisions related to immunizations require each student to be compliant with the current clinical facility policies relevant to the clinical experiences. The following immunizations are required for students enrolled in the nursing program:

- **Hepatitis B:** All students are required to receive either the Hepatitis B vaccine series OR have a positive Hepatitis B titer. The vaccine series may be a series of two (2) or three (3) injections depending on the manufacturer. For a series of three, the student must have the first injection prior to the first term of registration. The second injection must be received one month after the initial vaccination; the third injection must be received six months after the first vaccination. For the series of two, the student must have the first injection prior to the first term of registration. The second injection must be received one

month after the initial vaccination. All Hepatitis documentation must be uploaded into ACEMAPP.

- **Varicella:** All students are required to receive two Varicella immunizations or have documentation of a positive Varicella titer. The student must have the first injection prior to the first term of registration. The second injection must be received two months after the initial vaccination. History of illness/ childhood illness does not meet the Varicella requirement. All Varicella documentation must be uploaded into ACEMAPP.
- **Influenza (Flu):** All students are required to get an annual influenza vaccine. The deadline for the flu vaccines each year is October 1. All influenza documentation must be uploaded into ACEMAPP. Specific detailed vaccine information is required with flu immunizations. See the sample vaccination form online. Student waivers are accepted. Unvaccinated students must wear a simple mask during flu season while at the clinical site (October-April).
- **COVID:** Documentation of the COVID vaccine is not required at this time. SUSCC immunization policies will continue to reflect the policies established by our clinical partners.
- **Measles, Mumps, Rubella (MMR):** All students are required to receive two MMR immunizations or have documentation of a positive MMR titer. All MMR documentation must be uploaded into ACEMAPP.
- **TDAP:** All students are required to have a current TDAP immunization. Immunizations are good for 10 years. All TDAP documentation must be uploaded into ACEMAPP.

TB SKIN TEST

A TB skin test is required annually. If a student has a positive skin test, then the student must have a chest x-ray every two years and complete the TB questionnaire annually. All TB documentation must be uploaded into ACEMAPP.

CPR CERTIFICATION / BASIC LIFE SUPPORT (BLS)

All Health Sciences Division students are required to be certified in Basic Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) through the American Heart Association at either the Healthcare Provider level or Basic Life Support level prior to registration each semester. **Red Cross certification is not accepted by our clinical partners.** Certification must be maintained while enrolled in the program. CPR is current for two years (24 months) from the issue date and must remain current throughout the semester. CPR documentation is uploaded by the student into ACEMAPP.

PERSONAL MEDICAL HEALTH INSURANCE

Each student in the Health Sciences Division must have personal health (medical) insurance throughout enrollment in the program. Documentation must be uploaded to ACEMAPP by the students. Students will not be allowed to register until their provided proof of Health Insurance has been approved in ACEMAPP. If uninsured, medical insurance per semester is available through a third party. Please contact the Health Records Clerk for information.

MALPRACTICE (LIABILITY) INSURANCE

Each student must maintain current malpractice insurance throughout enrollment in any Health Sciences Division program, including semesters without a clinical component. SUSCC purchases a blanket malpractice insurance policy that covers all enrolled Health Science students. A student fee is added when registering for a nursing course to cover the individual student cost. The cost of the insurance is approximately \$10-15 per semester for coverage at the \$1,000,000/\$3,000,000 level.

PHYSICAL EXAMINATION / HEALTH QUESTIONNAIRE

Students are required to submit upon admission to the Health Science program a health questionnaire completed by their healthcare provider. The completed health questionnaire is to be uploaded in ACEMAPP.

ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS

The Alabama College System endorses the Americans with Disabilities Act. In accordance with Southern Union State Community College policy, when requested, reasonable accommodations may be provided for individuals with disabilities. Reasonable accommodations are not retroactive. They begin the day the student submits the required form. Students must present documentation for accommodations each semester.

Physical, cognitive, psychomotor, affective, and social abilities are required in unique combinations to provide safe and effective patient care. The applicant/student must be able to meet the essential functions with or without reasonable accommodations throughout the program of learning. Admission, progression, and graduation are contingent upon one's ability to demonstrate the essential functions delineated for the Health Sciences programs with or without reasonable accommodations. The Health Sciences programs and/or its affiliated clinical agencies may identify additional essential functions. The Health Sciences programs reserve the right to amend the essential functions as deemed necessary.

In order to be admitted and to progress in the Health Sciences program one must possess a functional level of ability to perform the duties required of a healthcare provider. Admission or progression may be denied if a student is unable to demonstrate the essential functions with or without reasonable accommodations.

The essential functions delineated are those deemed necessary for the Alabama Community College System Health Science programs. No representation regarding industrial standards is implied. Similarly, any reasonable accommodations made will be determined and applied to the respective Health Sciences program and may vary from reasonable accommodations made by healthcare employers.

The nursing essential functions delineated on the SUSCC website (suscc.edu) are necessary for nursing program admission, progression, and graduation and for the provision of safe and effective patient care.

Upon admission, an individual who discloses a disability can request reasonable accommodations. Individuals will be asked to provide documentation of the disability in order to assist with the provision of appropriate reasonable accommodations. The respective College will provide reasonable accommodations but is not required to substantially alter the requirements or nature of the program or provide accommodations that inflict an undue burden on the respective College. In order to be admitted one must be able to perform all the essential functions with or without reasonable accommodations. If an individual's health changes during the program of learning, so that the essential functions cannot be met with or without reasonable accommodations, the student will be withdrawn from the Health Sciences program. The Health Sciences faculty reserves the right at any time to require an additional medical examination at the student's expense in order to assist with the evaluation of the student's ability to perform the essential functions.

Requests for reasonable accommodations should be directed to the Southern Union State Community College Disability Services Officer. If reasonable accommodations cannot be made, the student will not be able to remain in the Health Sciences program.

ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS VERIFICATION

Upon admission to the Nursing Program, students are required to complete the Essential Functions verification form. This form must be uploaded in ACEMAPP and updated as the student's status changes. You must respond on the verification form if you fully meet the criteria (100%) or are unable to fully meet the criteria (less than 100%). If you are unable to fully meet the criterion, an explanation and/or additional information will be required. Reasonable accommodation may be requested. The Southern Union State Community College Disability Services Coordinator will determine if the accommodations can be met.

Students who give birth or experience an illness or injury that requires, but is not limited to, hospitalization, surgery, or more than one week's absence may be required to provide a physician's statement which verifies:

- That returning to routine class, lab, and clinical activities does not pose undue risk or harm to the student or others with whom the student will come in contact.
- Compliance with the Essential Functions/Technical Standards established for the program of study.
- The student has no physical limitations/restrictions.

BACKGROUND CHECKS

Background checks will be conducted by one vendor approved by the clinical facilities and the Health Sciences Division. Background checks or drug screens conducted by any vendor or agency that is not approved will not be allowed. Background check results should be completed before newly admitted or returning Health Science students will be allowed to register for courses. Background checks and drug screens are valid for 18 months and must be repeated prior to their expiration. The student is responsible for paying for all background and drug screens required by the clinical agencies.

Students contract directly with the approved vendors and confidential results are maintained by the Health Records Coordinator. The clinical agency(ies) reserves the right to approve or deny the student for clinical privileges. Refusal of a clinical agency to accept a student for clinical rotations will prevent a student from enrolling in or participating in any of the SUSCC Health Sciences programs. The student is solely responsible for clearing any refusals/denials reported by the clinical agency. Students who are unable to resolve any denials will be dismissed from the Health Science Program and administratively withdrawn from all enrolled Health Science courses.

Students may not reenroll until the background check is clear. Some clinical settings may continue to require a separate background check, including fingerprints. At any time, the student cannot meet the clinical requirements of the agency; the student will be dismissed from the program and administratively withdrawn at the time the event occurs.

A background check and urine drug screen must be completed, resulted, and shared with SUSCC before you can register for classes. Background checks are valid for 18 months and must be shared by the student (through Advantage Students) with our clinical partners once assigned. All nursing students are required to have approved background checks and drug screens completed to meet the requirements of clinical agencies in accordance with Joint Commission (JC) standards.

DRUG SCREENS

Student Drug Screen Guidelines

As stipulated by the appropriate discipline-specific licensure agency, students must perform in the clinical setting in such a manner that will promote safe patient care. In addition, clinical agencies are obligated to ensure that patients are protected to the extent reasonably possible from possible harm due to completion of clinical rotations. This includes drug screening prior to the first clinical experience, random drug screening at intervals and drug screening should a student exhibit behaviors indicative of substance abuse. Drug Screens are valid for 18 months and must be shared by the student (through Advantage Students) with our clinical partners as directed.

Pre-Clinical/Random Screening

All students will receive the drug screening guidelines prior to clinical rotation in the Nursing Program. Drug screening will be scheduled and conducted by a designated laboratory determined by the school. The fee for testing is to be paid by the student. Any student failing to report for random screening at the designated time must complete testing with the designated laboratory within 48 hours or they will be dismissed from the program. Failure to complete drug screening as required will prohibit the student from completing the required health science courses.

Positive drug screens are confirmed by the Medical Review Officer (MRO). If additional information is needed from the student following the urine drug screen, the Advantage Students Medical Review Officer (MRO) will attempt to contact the student three (3) times. If unable to contact the student after three attempts, the drug screen will be reported as positive. It will be up to the student to contact Advantage Students.

SUBSTANCE ABUSE POLICY

Readmission to the Program

A student who is unable to complete the required courses due to a positive drug screen may apply for readmission to the Nursing Program. To be considered for readmission following a positive drug screen, the student must:

- Submit a letter from a treatment agency verifying the completion of an approved substance abuse program that meets licensure guidelines for the respective discipline.
- Submit to an unannounced drug screen at the student's expense prior to readmission. A positive screen will result in ineligibility for readmission.
- Submit to an unannounced drug screen at the student's expense prior to readmission and random drug screen throughout the program. Any additional positive drug screen will result in ineligibility for readmission.

Substance Abuse Verification Process

The Nursing Program, for the protection of patients, faculty, staff, and students, has the right to require a student to submit to testing for substance abuse at the student's expense when the health science program has reasonable cause to believe that a student is abusing controlled substances. Reasonable cause is defined as, but not limited to, the following:

- Observable phenomena, such as direct observation of drug use and/or the physical symptoms or manifestations of being under the influence of a drug, such as, but not limited to, slurred speech, noticeable change in grooming habits, impaired physical coordination, inappropriate comments or behaviors, and /or papillary changes;
- Abnormal conduct or erratic behavior, absenteeism, tardiness, or deterioration in performance.
- A report of drug use.
- Evidence of tampering with a drug test.

- Information that the individual has caused or contributed to the harm of self, visitors, faculty, other staff, or patient as a result of being under the influence of drugs.
- Evidence of involvement in the use, possession, sale, solicitation, or transfer of drugs.

If a faculty member observes such behavior, and if such behavior is observed or validated by another faculty member or clinical agency staff member, the faculty member must dismiss the student from the educational or patient setting immediately and contact the Department Chair/designee in order to review the situation. The Department Chair/designee will then determine if there is “reasonable cause” to test the student for substance abuse.

If another student, or any other individual other than an instructor observes abnormal conduct or erratic behavior of a health science student, the observation must be reported immediately (or as soon as possible) to the appropriate instructor. Once the department chair is notified, the appropriate measures will be taken.

NURSING ADMISSION & PROGRESSION POLICIES

DEFINITIONS

Admission: Students not eligible for program reinstatement may apply for initial program admission as a new student. If accepted as a new student, the student must take or retake all nursing program courses.

Reinstatement: Students who have a withdrawal or failure in a nursing course and are eligible to return to that course will be considered for reinstatement to the program.

SOUTHERN UNION STATE COMMUNITY COLLEGE NURSING PROGRAM ADMISSION POLICY

Admission to the Nursing Program is competitive and based on a comprehensive review of each applicant's academic history, prerequisites, and program capacity. After meeting minimal application eligibility requirements, applicants will be rank ordered for acceptance using a point system based on the highest composite score on ACT National or ACT Residual (minimum composite score of 18) and quality points from selected college courses. Additional points may be awarded. Please see the program application worksheet for the criteria.

Meeting minimal requirements does not guarantee acceptance.

Students are not eligible to apply for admission as a new student to any Health Science program while currently enrolled in the SUSCC nursing program

Starting with the Fall 2025 admission cohort, eligible applicants who have successfully completed 12 or more credit hours at Southern Union will receive priority consideration during the first round of the admission cycle. Applicants who have not successfully completed 12 or more credit hours at Southern Union will be considered during the second round of the admission cycle.

Effective September 1, 2025, to maintain academic standards and program integrity, a student may be admitted as a new student to the Southern Union Nursing Program a maximum of two (2) times. This includes initial program admission into NUR 112 and/or NUR 209. A third initial program admission will not be permitted. This policy applies to all initial program admission applicants of the Southern Union Nursing program, including those in ADN and ADN Mobility program options.

ALABAMA COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM / SOUTHERN UNION STATE COMMUNITY COLLEGE NURSING PROGRESSION POLICY

The following progression policies will be followed:

1. A total of **two** unsuccessful attempts in two separate semesters (D, F, or W) in the nursing program will result in dismissal from the program.
2. A student may be **reinstated** to the nursing program only once. The **reinstatement** is not guaranteed due to limitations in clinical spaces. All nursing program admission standards must be met.
3. A student must have a 2.0 cumulative GPA at SUSCC for **reinstatement**.

4. If a student has a documented extenuating circumstance (defined on pg. 23) that should be considered related to the course performance, then this student may request a hearing before the Admission Progression Committee for a decision on repeating a course or readmission to the program.
5. ADN students whose second unsuccessful attempt occurs in NUR 211 or 221 may apply for the ADN Mobility program option. These students must meet all admission requirements for the ADN Mobility option, including a 2.5 cumulative GPA, one year of full-time work experience with direct patient care as an LPN, and a valid Alabama Practical Nursing License.

REINSTATEMENT POLICY

Students who interrupt the specified progression through the program of study for any reason must apply to return to the program.

Reinstatement eligibility into the nursing program is based on;

1. A 2.0 grade point average from Southern Union coursework.
2. A cumulative grade point average of 2.0 or higher.
3. Reinstatement must occur within one year from the last clinical course, or the student must reapply to the program as a new student.

**Students who are unsuccessful in NUR112 or NUR 209 are not eligible for reinstatement and must apply as a new student to the program.*

PROCESS FOR REINSTATEMENT

1. Students must schedule an appointment with a member of the Health Sciences Admissions team to discuss eligibility for reinstatement.
2. Students must apply for reinstatement to the nursing program online by the deadline. Students who submit reinstatement requests after the deadline may be considered at the next course availability.
3. Students must apply for readmission to the college if not currently enrolled.

When reinstated into the program:

- students must update immunizations and other health records, drug screen, and background check as required for clinical experiences.
- Students will be responsible for any course expenses (supplies, testing fees, evaluation fees) associated with repeating a nursing course.
- Students may be required to demonstrate competency in clinical skills.
- The policies in the *Nursing Program Student Handbook* and *College Catalog* at the time of reentering will apply.
- must meet the standards and curriculum requirements in effect at the time of reinstatement.

TRANSFER POLICY

Students wishing to transfer must:

1. Meet the entry and progression requirements of the institution and the nursing program.
2. Provide evidence that all required general education and nursing courses maintain a grade of C or better taken at another institution and maintain a 2.0 cumulative GPA in all previous college coursework.
 - a. Alabama Community College System Standardized Nursing Curriculum courses will be transferred without review of the course syllabus.
 - b. Nursing courses from any other institution are accepted only after review by the accepting institution to ensure content consistency.

3. Must be a student in good standing and eligible to return to the previous nursing programs indicated by a letter of recommendation from the Dean/Director of the previous program.
4. Must occur within one year from the last clinical course.
5. Complete at least 25% of the total program at the accepting institution.
6. Acceptance of transfer students into nursing programs is limited by the number of faculty and clinical facilities available. Meeting minimal requirements does not guarantee acceptance.
7. Validation of skills and knowledge may be required to determine program placement.
8. Must meet acceptability criteria for placement at clinical agencies for clinical experiences.

LICENSURE

LEGAL LIMITATIONS FOR LICENSURE AND EMPLOYMENT

(Alabama Board of Nursing)

According to the Nurse Practice Act of Alabama, the Administrative Code of the Alabama Board of Nursing, application for licensure in Alabama may be denied if a person has been convicted of a felony, is guilty of a crime involving moral turpitude, and/or has displayed other grounds for denial as specified by law.

Additionally, many healthcare facilities will not employ a person, even if fully certified and/or licensed, who has been convicted of a felony or who has unfit personal habits including alcohol or drug abuse.

While an applicant may meet the qualifications, final approval to take the licensure examination and become licensed in Alabama is subject to action by the Board of Nursing.

Passing a Criminal Background check and admission to the nursing program does not ensure the ability to take a licensure exam.

DENIAL OF A LICENSE

Grounds for denial of an RN or PN licensure by examination include but are not limited to:

- conviction of a felony
- conviction of a misdemeanor or felony involving moral turpitude or gross immorality
- conviction of a state or federal law relating to controlled substances (may be misdemeanor or felony)
- failure to show good moral character pertaining to nursing
- abuse of or addiction to alcohol or other drugs
- being mentally incompetent
- unprofessional conduct
- false representation of facts on the application for licensure

(Code of Alabama, 1975, Section 34-21-25; Alabama Board of Nursing Administrative Code 610-X-8-.01; 610-X-8-.05)

APPLICATION FOR LICENSURE

Instructions and the application for RN or PN licensure by examination may be obtained from the State Board of Nursing websites.

The application for licensure by examination includes questions regarding past arrests or convictions for DUI and/or criminal offenses (misdemeanor or felony) and a history of mental illness or chemical dependency. Candidates are advised to respond honestly to the regulatory questions as failure to do so can result in denial of license.

The regulatory questions aid the Board in determining the applicant's "good moral character", as required by law. An affirmative response does not preclude an individual from licensure and applicants are expected to read the questions carefully and answer honestly. As a matter of fact, many persons are licensed each year who provide affirmative responses to one or more of the regulatory questions. The regulatory questions ask about your past history in the following areas: Criminal History, Substance Use, Physical or Mental Health, Discipline or Investigations of Other Licenses or Professions, and Military Discharge.

Applications that indicate eligibility for licensure pending examination results will be processed routinely. Applications with an affirmative response to one or more of the regulatory questions cannot be routinely processed.

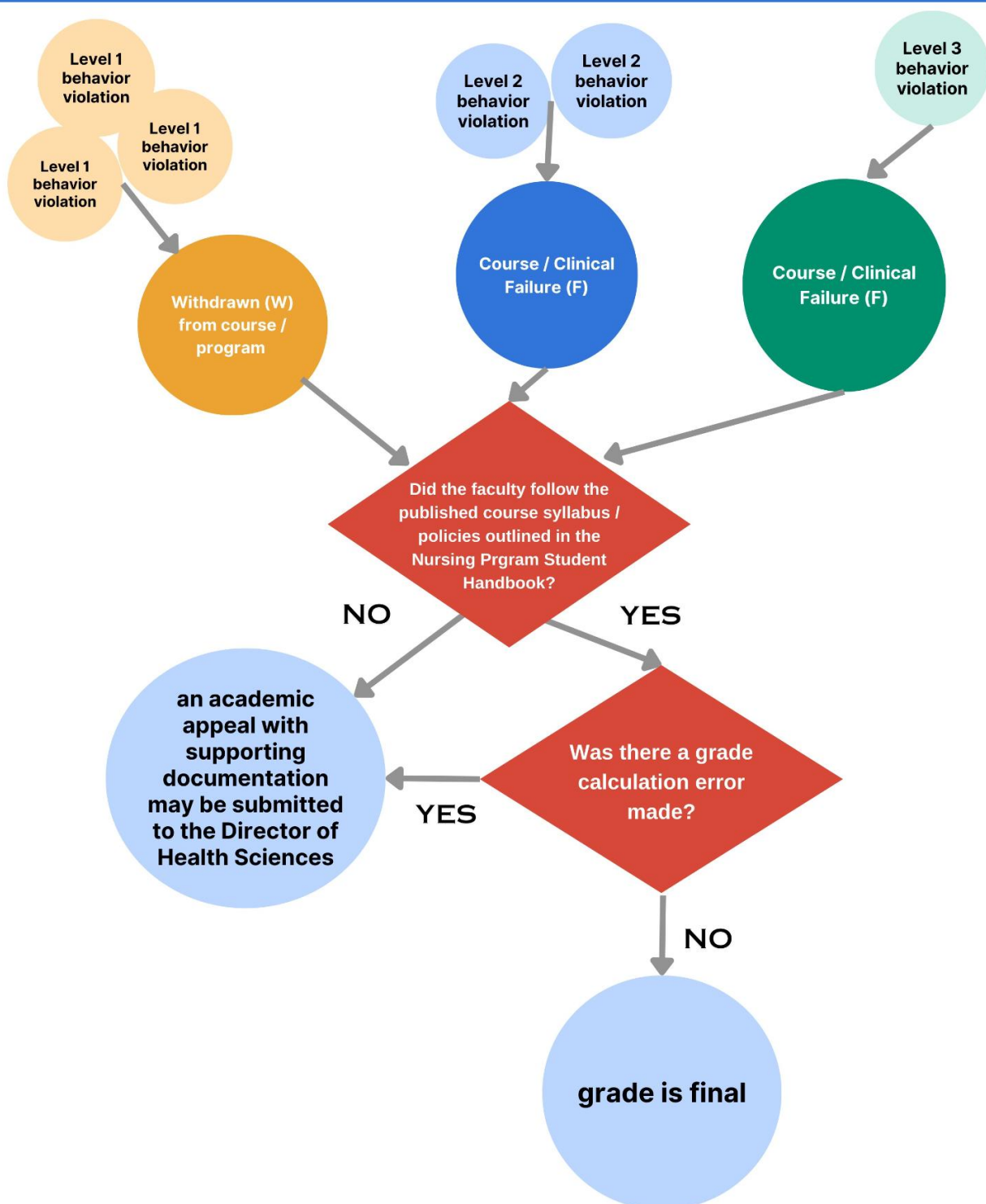
For additional information, please visit the Alabama Board of Nursing website
(<https://www.abn.alabama.gov/licensing/apply/faqs/>)

STATEMENT OF DISCLAIMER

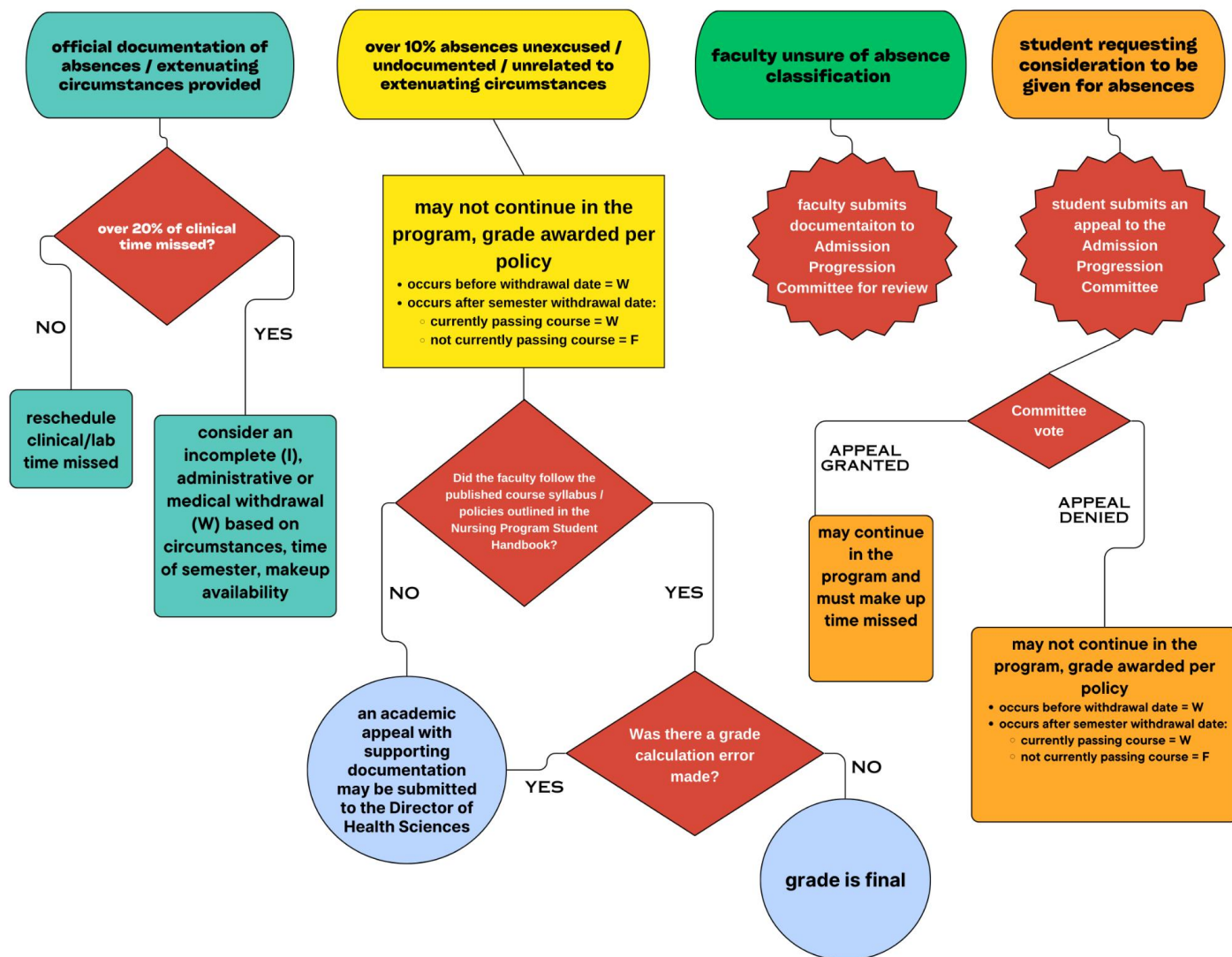
The College reserves the right to change cost, curriculum, course content, calendar, or any other items contained herein as changing circumstances may dictate. All such changes are effective at such times as the proper authorities determine and may apply not only to prospective students but also to those who are already enrolled at the College.

All formats, guidelines, and evaluation criteria as published in this handbook are subject to modification at the discretion of nursing faculty for the purpose of meeting the specific requirements of the changing professional objectives of varying nursing courses. Such modifications will be published in the respective course syllabi and posted in the course management system for the class.

Discipline Policy



Semester Clinical/Lab Absences



CLINICAL SKILLS / COMPETENCIES

Competencies **REQUIRED** each clinical rotation:

Perform hand hygiene. Maintain safety and infection control principles.
Obtain a report from the off-going nurse and provide a report to the nurse upon leaving the unit.
Assist other healthcare personnel in the care of patients on the unit within the student's scope of practice.
Obtain vital signs, including blood pressure, pulse, respirations, height/weight, and oxygen saturation.
Document assessments, vital signs, medications, narrative nurses notes, etc in the designated location.
Perform head-to-toe and focused physical assessments to include the identification of normal and abnormal findings.
Assist patients with activities of daily living such as feeding, clothing, care of teeth and hair, and toileting.
Communicate with patients and families using therapeutic communication methods.
Consistently demonstrate professionalism, integrity, responsibility, accountability, and ethical practices.
Complete and submit any assigned clinical paperwork to the nursing course faculty.
Log skills and complete the daily clinical report (DCR) in Trajecsyst.

Fundamental/basic competencies:

Assist with the admission and discharge of patients.
Apply personal protective equipment.
Apply sterile gloves/surgical gowning and gloves. <i>*Requires completion of the perioperative module in NUR 113 class and/or lab before performing at clinical.</i>
Assist patients with ambulation, including but not exclusive to the use of mobile assistive devices such as walkers, canes, crutches, gait belts, and wheelchairs.
Follow safety precautions for fall prevention, seizures, etc.
Position and transfer patients.
Perform restorative care to include active and passive range-of-motion exercises and contracture care.
Perform hygiene care including bed baths, urinary catheter care, and ostomy care.
Administer enemas.
Perform skin care and pressure ulcer prevention, turning.
Apply sequential compression stockings and/or devices.
Apply restraints only as facility policy allows and under the supervision of the supervising mentor.
Perform peripheral blood draw with a butterfly needle and syringe. <i>*Peripheral blood specimen collection requires a successful NUR 113 IV insertion skills validation in the SUSCC skills lab on campus before performing at clinical.</i> <i>+Student nurses are not permitted to collect blood on anyone under 16 years old at any time.</i>

<p>Perform wet-to-dry, clean dressings, and sterile dressings.</p> <p><i>*Central line dressing changes require a successful NUR 211 skills validation in the SUSCC skills lab on campus before performing at clinical.</i></p>
<p>Empty and care for surgical drains such as Jackson-Pratts, Hemovac, etc.</p> <p><i>*Requires completion of the perioperative module and content discussion in NUR 113 class and/or skills lab before performing at clinical.</i></p>
<p>Apply steri-strips, remove bandages, and remove staples and sutures.</p> <p><i>*Requires completion of the perioperative module and content discussion in NUR 113 class and/or skills lab before performing at clinical.</i></p>
<p>Apply cold and heat therapies.</p>
<p>Provide care for casts, traction, pins, and air splints.</p> <p><i>*Requires completion of the Functional Ability: Mobility/Immobility module in NUR 113 class before performing at clinical.</i></p>
<p>Insert, provide suction, and remove nasogastric tubes.</p>
<p>Administer enteral and nasogastric tube feedings.</p>
<p>Administer oxygen therapy and perform airway management.</p>
<p>Administer incentive spirometer therapy.</p>
<p>Provide oral, nasal, and tracheostomy suctioning.</p> <p><i>*Tracheostomy care/suctioning requires a successful NUR 113 skills validation in the SUSCC skills lab on campus before performing at clinical.</i></p>
<p>Administer medications by oral, intramuscular, intradermal, subcutaneous, otic, ophthalmic, nasal, rectal, nebulizer (excluding racemic epinephrine by nebulizer), or tube routes under the supervision of the mentor after safely demonstrating knowledge/proficiency.</p>
<p>Insert/discontinue intravenous (IV) catheters and provide IV therapy.</p> <p><i>*IV insertion, removal, and therapy require a successful NUR 113 skills validation in the SUSCC lab before performing at clinical.</i></p> <p><i>+Student nurses are not permitted to start IVs on anyone under 16 years old at any time.</i></p>
<p>Nursing students may administer intravenous medications (push, IVPB) under direct supervision after safely demonstrating knowledge/proficiency.</p> <p><i>*Administering IV medications requires a successful NUR 113 IV medication skills validation in the SUSCC lab prior to performing at clinical.</i></p>
<p>Insert and remove urinary catheters (straight and/or indwelling)</p> <p><i>*Urinary catheterization insertion and removal requires a successful NUR 113 skills validation in the SUSCC lab before performing at clinical.</i></p>
<p>Perform basic life support.</p>
<p>Perform end-of-life care.</p>
<p>Perform post-mortem care.</p>

Advanced competencies:

Perform sterile dressing procedures pending facility policy.
Assign tasks to other healthcare personnel (nursing assistants/care techs).
Perform physical assessments on pediatric patients.
Perform subjective and/or physical assessments on psychiatric patients. <i>*Requires completion of the Psychosocial Well-Being content in NUR 114 class and/or lab before performing at clinical.</i>
Perform subjective and/or physical assessments on pregnant patients, post-partum patients, and newborns. <i>*Requires completion of the Reproduction / Childbearing content in NUR 114 class and/or simulation before performing at clinical.</i>
Care for patients in labor and delivery includes but is not limited to applying and monitoring external fetal heart tone (FHT) and uterine contraction monitors (TOCO), monitoring internal FHT and uterine contraction monitors, conducting nonstress tests, assisting with epidurals, and assisting with deliveries. <i>*Requires completion of the Reproduction / Childbearing content in NUR 114 class and/or simulation before performing at clinical.</i>
Administer care of the newborn, including but not limited to assessing the cord, determining Apgar scores, taking measurements, administering vitamin K, Hepatitis vaccine, and erythromycin ointment; and performing heel sticks for PKU and glucose monitoring, monitoring phototherapy, and assisting with circumcisions. <i>*Requires completion of the Reproduction / Childbearing content in NUR 114 class and/or simulation before performing at clinical.</i>
Manage postpartum care including but not limited to episiotomy care, assessing for postpartum hemorrhage, and assisting with breastfeeding. <i>*Requires completion of the Reproduction / Childbearing content in NUR 114 class and/or simulation before performing at clinical.</i>
Perform routine care of chest tubes. <i>*Requires completion of the Gas Exchange module in NUR 211 class before performing at clinical.</i>
Maintain and administer fluids and/or push medications through vascular access devices (PICC, midline, central line, port, etc.) with direct supervision of the mentor at all times. <i>*VAD therapy requires a successful skills validation in the SUSCC lab in NUR 211 prior to performing clinical.</i>

Skills that MAY NOT be performed by a nursing student at any time:

Any skills for which the student nurse has not been taught or validated by the nursing education program.
Administration and discontinuation of blood or blood products.
Administration of IV chemotherapy.
Taking verbal or phone orders without the presence of the mentor.
Transporting a patient alone when an RN is required.

Providing a second signature/check for controlled drugs, blood products, and medications listed as requiring independent double-checking (EX: insulin).
Witnessing consents.
Obtaining cord blood.
Checking for cervical dilation and effacement.
Obtaining vaginal cultures.