



NOVA NURSING PROGRAM STUDENT HANDBOOK

**Medical Education Campus 6699 Springfield Center
Drive Springfield, VA 22150**

This handbook serves as a guide to familiarize students with the policies and procedures of the NOVA Nursing Program. In addition to the program-specific information outlined here, students are expected to adhere to the policies described in the [NOVA Student Policies and Handbook](#) and the [NOVA College Catalog](#). Students should review these publications to ensure they remain in good standing in both the program and the college.

Disclaimer: The Nursing Student Handbook is current as of January 2026. Nursing program policies may differ from and supersede general college policies when required for regulatory and accreditation compliance. Students can contact the Nursing Program with any questions or to confirm details. The program may update policies, requirements, or curriculum at any time, including while a student is enrolled.

Welcome Nursing Students

Welcome to the Nursing Program at Northern Virginia Community College! You are about to embark on an exciting and challenging educational journey that will prepare you for a rewarding career. Whether you are a new or continuing student, we congratulate you on choosing nursing as your profession.

You have selected a college with a rich tradition of excellence and innovation. We take seriously our responsibility to prepare knowledgeable, caring, and clinically proficient nurses. Each member of NOVA's Nursing Division is committed to assisting you in achieving success.

As you begin your educational journey with us, understand that the dedication of time, energy, and hard work will produce enormous rewards in terms of skills, knowledge, and a sound understanding of the nursing profession. Your education is an investment in you!

We at NOVA are committed to student success. Our faculty is experienced in both nursing practice and teaching and will advise you during your student nursing tenure at NOVA. The entire department is committed to helping you achieve your goal.

This handbook will provide an understanding of the program and requirements, along with the resources available to you.

Once again, on behalf of the NOVA Nursing Division's Faculty and Staff welcome to our community of learning.

Sincerely,

Christine Slevin

Christine Slevin, MSN, CCM, RN

Interim Dean of Nursing,

Northern Virginia Community College

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Key Terms

Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing, Inc. (ACEN): The national accreditation agency that accredits the NOVA Nursing Program.

ANA Standards of Care: The professional standards set by the American Nurses Association to guide ethical and safe nursing practice.

Canvas LMS: NOVA's online learning management system where students access courses, assignments, and grades.

Clinical Evaluation Tool (CET): The form used to document student performance against the Nursing Program Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs).

Clinical Hours: The hours a student spends on-site performing direct patient care.

Clinical Portfolio: An online collection of required clinical documentation maintained by students to ensure compliance with clinical site agreements, reviewed by instructors at the start of each rotation.

Clinical Site: The location where students provide care to clients as part of their clinical education, including primary, secondary, and tertiary healthcare settings.

Clinical Skills Competency Demonstration: A structured performance assessment of clinical skills required to return to the program.

Collaborative Testing: A learning strategy in which students work together in small groups to complete a test immediately following the individual exam.

Common Curriculum: Indicates that the curriculum is shared across all VCCS nursing programs for consistency in statewide student learning.

Concept-Based Curriculum: A curriculum structured around key nursing concepts rather than isolated courses, promoting application of knowledge across multiple clinical situations.

Course Failure: Earning a grade of D or F in any nursing course.

Course Withdrawal: A student formally removes themselves from a course in accordance with the NOVA Academic Calendar.

Cumulative GPA: The overall grade point average across all courses, required to maintain progression in the program.

DISA: The system used to track compliance with clinical requirements for nursing students, formerly known as CastleBranch.

Drug Dosage Calculation (DDC) Competency: The program requirement that students demonstrate the ability to accurately calculate drug dosages.

Ethical Standards: Principles guiding nursing practice, including respect for patient dignity, advocacy, integrity, and ongoing human growth.

Excused Absence: An approved absence due to medical leave or other officially authorized reasons.

Exit Interview: A required meeting at the time of withdrawal, course, or program failure to discuss available options and next steps.

Incident/Infectious Exposure: Any event in the clinical setting where a student is exposed to an infectious agent or sustains an injury.

Level 1–4: The four semesters of nursing coursework in the NOVA Nursing Program following prerequisite coursework.

Malpractice Insurance: Personal liability insurance required for all students participating in clinical experiences, with minimum coverage of \$1,000,000 per individual and \$6,000,000 aggregate.

Matriculation: The process of enrolling and being accepted into the nursing program.

National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX-RN®): The exam graduates of the NOVA Nursing Program may apply to take for licensure as a Registered Nurse.

Next Generation NCLEX-RN® (NGN): An updated nursing licensure exam that tests clinical judgment using more complex and realistic case questions.

No-Call/No-Show: Failure to notify the instructor of an absence before the start of a clinical or laboratory session.

Nursing Judgment: The process of making competent decisions related to the provision of safe and effective nursing care.

Nursing Process: A structured approach used by nurses to provide safe and effective care, including assessment, planning, implementation, and evaluation of patient care.

Nursing Skills Lab: A simulated hospital environment where students practice hands-on psychomotor nursing skills under faculty guidance to build competence for clinical settings.

Open Skills Lab: Designated times during the semester when students may independently practice previously taught nursing skills, under the supervision of a lab instructor.

Performance Improvement Plan (PIP): A formal documented plan outlining specific expectations and steps for a student to correct performance or behavior.

Program Exit: The act of removing a student from the nursing program due to course failure or other infractions.

Progression: A student's movement through the nursing program from one level to the next, contingent upon meeting academic and clinical requirements.

Progressive Consequences: A structured system of increasing interventions or penalties applied for repeated unsuccessful attempts or missed lab sessions.

Provisional Acceptance: A student is offered a spot in the program that becomes final only after they meet criminal background and drug screen requirements.

Remediation: Required additional instruction or practice to promote successful achievement of course objectives.

Simulation: Structured learning activities in a realistic controlled patient care environment.

State Nurse Practice Act: The legal framework within a state that governs the scope and standards of nursing practice.

Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs): Specific skills and knowledge students must demonstrate to successfully complete a nursing course.

Tardy: Arrival after the scheduled start time of a didactic, clinical, or laboratory session.

Technical Standards: Program-specific cognitive, psychomotor, affective, physical, and social abilities required to successfully complete the nursing program.

Tier Offense: Categorized student violations, grouped by severity, that determine the level of disciplinary action.

Title IX Leave: Leave due to pregnancy or other protected circumstances. Title IX is a federal law that protects students from discrimination based on sex.

Transfer Student: A student entering the NOVA Nursing Program after beginning nursing coursework at another VCCS-accredited A.D.N. program.

Unexcused Absence: Any absence not qualifying as excused.

Virginia Board of Nursing (VBON): The state regulatory board that approves the NOVA Nursing Program curriculum.

Introduction to the NOVA Nursing Program

The NOVA Nursing Program awards an Associated Degree in Nursing (A.D.N.) and is designed to prepare students to participate as contributing members of the healthcare team, rendering direct care to patients in a variety of healthcare facilities and agencies. Upon satisfactory completion of the program, students will be eligible to apply to take the [National Council Licensure Examination \(NCLEX-RN®\)](#) leading to state licensure as a Registered Nurse (RN) and are qualified to assume registered nurse positions in hospitals, nursing homes, clinics, physicians' offices, HMOs, and other settings.

NOVA has adopted the VCCS Common Concept-Based Curriculum (CBC), which was fully approved by the [Virginia Board of Nursing \(VBON\)](#) and the [Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing \(ACEN\)](#). "Common" means that this curriculum is shared across all VCCS nursing programs, providing consistency in what students learn statewide. "Concept-based" means the program is organized around key nursing concepts rather than isolated courses, helping students apply knowledge across different clinical situations.

The nursing program is a 5-semester program: in the first semester, students complete prerequisite coursework to prepare for admission to the program and for the study of nursing. This is followed by four semesters of nursing coursework (Levels 1–4).

History of Northern Virginia Community College Nursing Program

The Nursing Program was established in 1964 as part of the Health Technologies Division when Northern Virginia Technical College opened for classes with 761 students. The program was located in the Carlin Springs Road Warehouse in the Bailey's Crossroads area. In 1967, the Nursing Program and the Health Technologies Division moved to the Annandale Campus. A building specifically designated for the Nursing Program opened in 1972. In the fall of 2003, in response to the strong demand for nurses and qualified health care professionals, the college opened the Medical Education Campus in Springfield, Virginia. In Fall 2018 NOVA joined other nursing programs in the Virginia Community Colleges System (VCCS) in adopting a state-wide common concept-based curriculum.

Nursing Program Mission Statement

The mission of the VCCS Nursing Program is to provide affordable, community access to quality nursing education. The VCCS nursing programs prepare qualified students to provide safe, competent, entry-level nursing care in 21st- century healthcare environments. Students are prepared to meet the ever-increasing complexity of the healthcare needs of the citizens of Virginia.

Nursing Program Philosophy

VCCS nursing faculty ascribe to the core competencies for nursing and nursing education. While firmly based in science and the arts, the essence of nursing is caring and compassionate patient-centered care. Ethical standards, respect for individual dignity, and consideration of cultural context are implicit in the practice of patient-centered care. The nurse advocates for patients and families in ways that promote self-determination, integrity, and ongoing growth as human beings. Nursing care is provided in collaboration with the patient, the family, and members of the health care team. The nurse displays a spirit of inquiry by examining evidence to improve quality of care, promote safety and improve patient outcomes. Nursing judgment is integral to making competent

decisions related to the provision of safe and effective nursing care. Information essential to nursing care is communicated via a variety of technological and human means.

Accreditation and Approvals

The NOVA Nursing Program is accredited by the [Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing, Inc. \(ACEN\)](http://www.acen.org), 3343 Peachtree Road NE, Suite 500, Atlanta, GA 30326.

The NOVA Nursing Program is approved by the [Virginia Department of Health Professions, Board of Nursing](http://www.vdh.virginia.gov), Perimeter Center, 9960 Mayland Drive, Suite 300, Henrico, Virginia 23233-1463.

NOVA Nursing Student Learning Outcomes

Client-Centered Care	Provide client centered care promoting therapeutic relationships, caring behaviors, and self-determination across the lifespan for diverse populations.
Safety	Practice safe nursing care that minimizes the risk of harm across systems and client populations.
Clinical Judgment	Integrate clinical judgment when collaborating with the healthcare team in the management of care for complex clients.
Professional Behaviors	Practice professional behaviors that encompass the legal/ethical framework while incorporating self-reflection, leadership, and a commitment to recognize the value of life-long learning.
Quality Improvement	Manage client care through quality improvement processes, information technology, and fiscal responsibility to meet client needs and support organizational outcomes.
Collaboration	Demonstrate principles of collaborative practice within the nursing and healthcare teams fostering mutual respect and shared decision-making to achieve stated outcomes of care.
Pharmacology	Manage the appropriateness, accuracy, and client response to pharmacology principles for clients with complex conditions.

Leveled Nursing Program Student Learning Outcomes Across Curriculum

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Client-Centered Care	Demonstrate the use of therapeutic communication, caring behaviors, and client self-determination in the provision of basic nursing care.	Assess diverse client values, beliefs, and attitudes as well as Community provision of client-centered care.	Apply principles of client centered care to clients across the lifespan.	Provide client centered care promoting therapeutic relationships, caring for diverse populations.
Safety	Report client safety issues and risks.	Use safety measures when caring for clients in the community and health care agencies.	Incorporate factors for improvement of client safety for clients across the lifespan.	Practice safe nursing care that minimizes the risk of harm across systems and client populations.
Clinical Judgment	Apply the components of the clinical judgment across the lifespan.	Differentiate relevant cues in the care of clients with acute and chronic conditions across the lifespan.	Apply clinical judgment when prioritizing the delivery of client-centered care across the lifespan.	Integrate clinical judgment when collaborating with the healthcare team in the management of care for complex clients.
Professional Behaviors	Demonstrate professionalism and professional behaviors.	Recognize the impact of personal beliefs, values, and attitudes in developing professionalism and professional behaviors.	Incorporate legal/ethical principles and professional nursing standards in the care of clients.	Practice professional behaviors that encompass the legal/ethical framework while incorporating self-reflection, leadership, and a commitment to recognize the value of lifelong learning.
Quality Improvement	Identify the role of quality improvement and informatics in client care.	Use technology and information management tools in providing quality client care.	Examine the impact of quality improvement processes, information technology and fiscal resources in	Manage client care through quality improvement processes, information technology, and fiscal responsibility

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
			the provision of nursing care.	to meet client needs and support organizational outcomes.
Collaboration	Define the roles of the health care team.	Examine the roles of the nurse and the health care team in community and acute care settings.	Participate as a member of the health care team in the delivery of nursing care to clients across the lifespan.	Demonstrate principles of collaborative practice within the nursing and healthcare teams fostering mutual respect and shared decision-making to achieve stated outcomes of care.
Pharmacology	Identify the safety practices necessary for medication preparation and administration.	Demonstrate preparation and administration of pharmacological therapies to include parenteral.	Integrate pathophysiology and principles of pharmacology in the delivery of client care in a variety of populations.	Manage the appropriateness, accuracy, and client response to pharmacology principles for clients with complex conditions.

Nursing Program Essentials/Technical Standards

Nursing students must meet both the academic and technical standards of the program, with or without reasonable accommodation. The following technical standards represent a sample of the cognitive, affective, psychomotor, physical, and social abilities required to successfully complete the nursing program curriculum and provide safe and effective health care.

Requirements	Standards
Critical Thinking, Analytical Reasoning, and Clinical Judgment	Able to measure, calculate, reason, analyze, and synthesize subjective and objective client data to problem-solve complex clinical situations. Apply the nursing process to identify, prevent, and manage client problems and create evidence-based, client-centered plans of care. Able to recognize and manage potential risks related to clients' existing conditions, treatments, or procedures. Able to recognize and address performance improvement and quality improvement issues in the clinical setting.
Professional Relationships and Ethics	Exhibit commitment to and abide by the professional standards of nursing practice as defined by governing bodies. Possess attributes that include empathy, compassion, altruism, integrity, honesty, responsibility, accountability, and tolerance. Able to promote caring client relationships and advocate for the clients' needs. Exhibits respect for cultural, religious, and lifestyle diversity. Able to collaborate efficiently and effectively with members of the interdisciplinary health care team. Able to identify clients' needs and delegate tasks to appropriate personnel. Able to supervise personnel in performance of these tasks. Possess emotional stability to adapt and function effectively under stressful circumstances.
Motor and Sensory Skills	Ability to elicit and interpret accurate and complete physical exam data through inspection, palpation, percussion, and auscultation. Ability to promptly detect and accurately interpret subtle changes in clients' health status through clinical presentations like skin discoloration, swelling, changes in body sounds, facial expressions, etc. Ability to complete procedures and treatments, maintain surgical and medical asepsis, administer medications safely and effectively, perform Activities of Daily Living tasks safely, including repositioning, lifting, and transfers, and other nursing functions. Ability to respond promptly to client emergencies and provide timely and effective interventions such as cardio-pulmonary resuscitation and other life support procedures. These skills require unimpaired mobility and the use of vision, hearing, and touch or the functional equivalent.

Professional Behaviors

The Nursing program defines professional behavior in alignment with the American Nurses Association (ANA) Standards of Practice. Students are expected to uphold these standards throughout the program. All professional behavior competencies must be demonstrated while in the program.

Standards for Professional Behaviors
Accepts responsibility for one's own actions and attitudes.
Demonstrates the ability to develop and maintain therapeutic relationships and appropriate personal boundaries.
Demonstrates a respectful, sensitive, and non-judgmental manner when communicating with others. Others are defined as: peers, faculty, clients, staff, families, community, and staff.
Demonstrates personal and professional ethics, honesty, and integrity.
Completes assignments as required and scheduled.
Provides prior notification to appropriate faculty when unable to meet commitments or requirements.
Participates in clinical activities as scheduled, arriving on time and prepared for the daily assignment.
Demonstrates professional appearance and presentation in clinical settings.
Demonstrates the ability to use good judgment in all decision making and provide sound rationale for actions.
Respects others during clinical activities (i.e., no talking while others are talking, cell phones are silenced, and no inappropriate use of computers)
Demonstrates respect and courtesy to all individuals regardless of culture, ethnicity, religion, work experience, gender, age and sexual orientation.
Communicates with others with respect, sensitivity, and courtesy in all forms (verbal, nonverbal, written, and electronic; includes listening and caring behaviors).
Maintains confidentiality of client information in conversation, electronic and written means.
Actively participates as a patient advocate.

The Scope of Practice for the Associate Degree Nursing Graduate

The ADN graduate practices as an entry-level Registered Nurse (RN) within the scope defined by the specific State Nurse Practice Act, the NCSBN Model Act, and the ANA Scope and Standards of Practice. RNs provide safe, evidence-based care across the lifespan using the nursing process and sound clinical judgment. They work with patients, families, and communities in common care

settings and collaborate with the interprofessional team. They set priorities, teach patients, and manage their care. RNs delegate and supervise tasks to licensed and unlicensed personnel as allowed by law. They practice ethically, communicate clearly, and remain accountable for their actions. Actual practice scope may vary according to state regulations and employer policies.

Qualifications and Requirements for Registered Nurse Examination and Licensure

Qualifications and requirements for an applicant for the Registered Nurse examination and licensure are stated in the [Virginia Code, Section 54.1-3017](#). Examples include but are not limited to:

1. committed no acts which are grounds for disciplinary action.
2. completed an approved four-year high school course of study or the equivalent thereof as determined by the appropriate educational agency.
3. passed the NCLEX RN® exam as required by the Board of Nursing; and
4. received a diploma or degree from an accredited professional nursing education program.

The Board of Nursing may refuse to admit a candidate to any examination or refuse to issue a license to any applicant for any of the following causes:

- Abuse, negligent practice, or misappropriation of a patient's or resident's property.
- Conviction of any felony or any misdemeanor involving moral turpitude.
- Practice in a manner contrary to the standards of ethics or in such a manner as to make his practice a danger to the health and welfare of patients or to the public unprofessional conduct.
- Use of alcohol or drugs to the extent that such use renders them unsafe to practice, or any mental or physical illness rendering him unsafe to practice

For more information on nursing licensure in Virginia, go to the [Virginia Department of Health Professions](#) site.

Admission, Progression, Re-entry, and Transfer to the Nursing Program

To maintain an active status in the program, students must meet all academic and clinical requirements as stated in this policy.

Admission

Selected applicants are offered provisional acceptance to the program contingent upon successfully completing a background check and drug screening by the provided deadline. Students who do not meet the requirements resulting from these screenings as outlined in the Clinical Affiliation agreements will not be admitted.

Students who are accepted, but choose not to enroll, may reapply. Additional details related to the admission process are outlined on the college [Nursing Division](#) website.

Program duration

This is a full-time 2-year program (4 semesters/levels). Students must enroll with full-time credits as outlined in each semester of the program. Students are expected to complete the

program within 2 years. The length of the program may not exceed 3.5 years from admission date (7 semesters = 150%)

Registration

Each semester students must register for both academic and clinical components of the appropriate nursing course prior to the first class and/or clinical.

Progression

Progression refers to a student's movement through the nursing program from one level to the next. To progress, students must meet the following requirements:

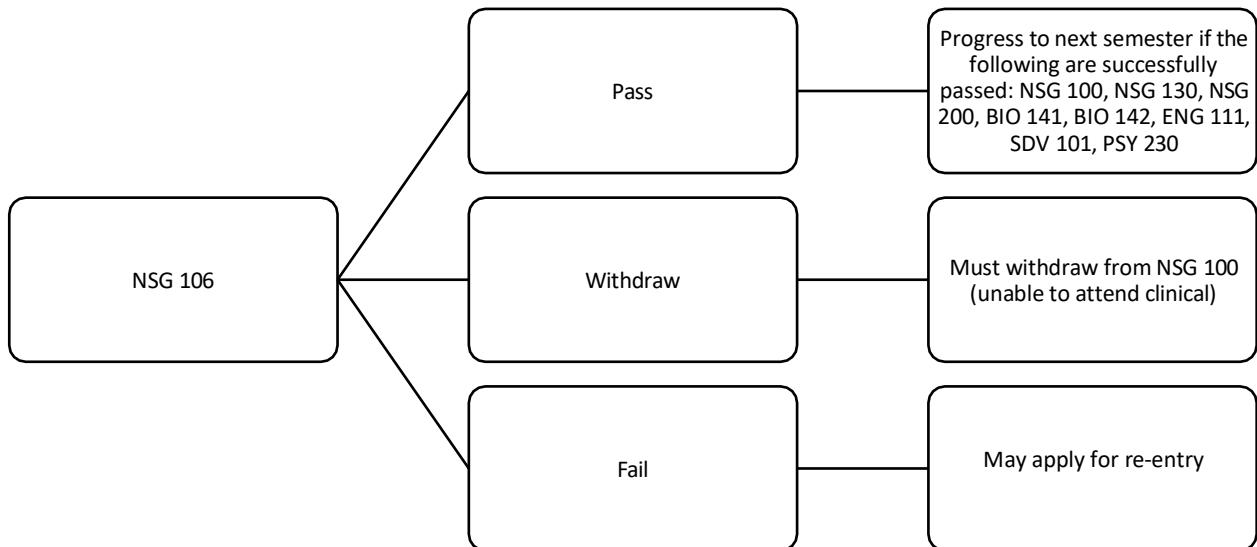
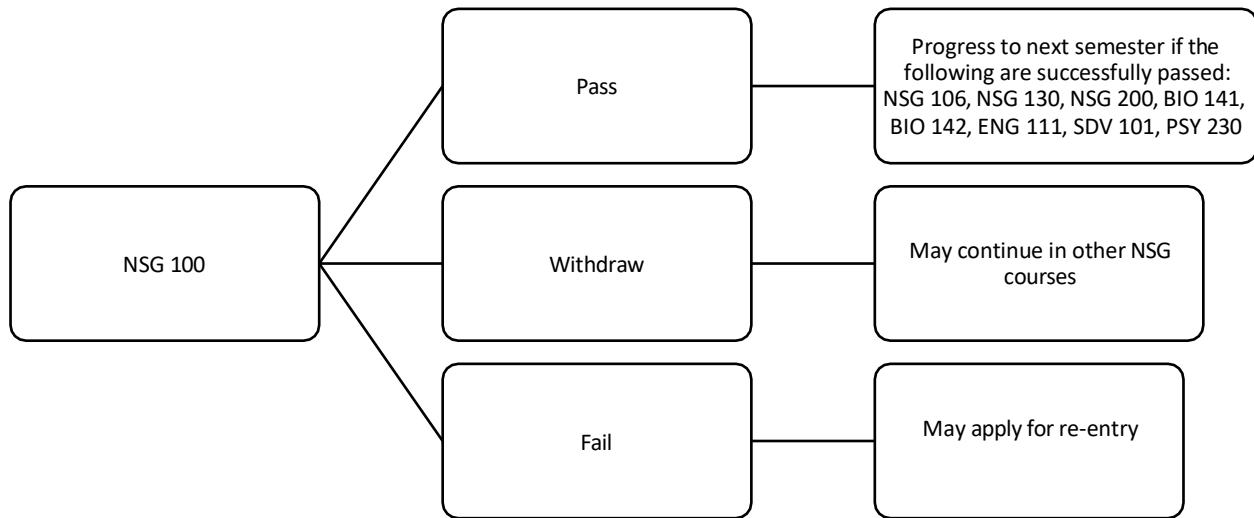
1. Earn a grade of 80% or higher in all nursing courses each semester.
2. Maintain a cumulative GPA of 2.0 or higher.
3. Complete all nursing courses in the sequence outlined in the VCCS course progression plan (see course progression map).
4. Complete all required general education (non-nursing) courses with a grade of "C" or higher before advancing to the next level.

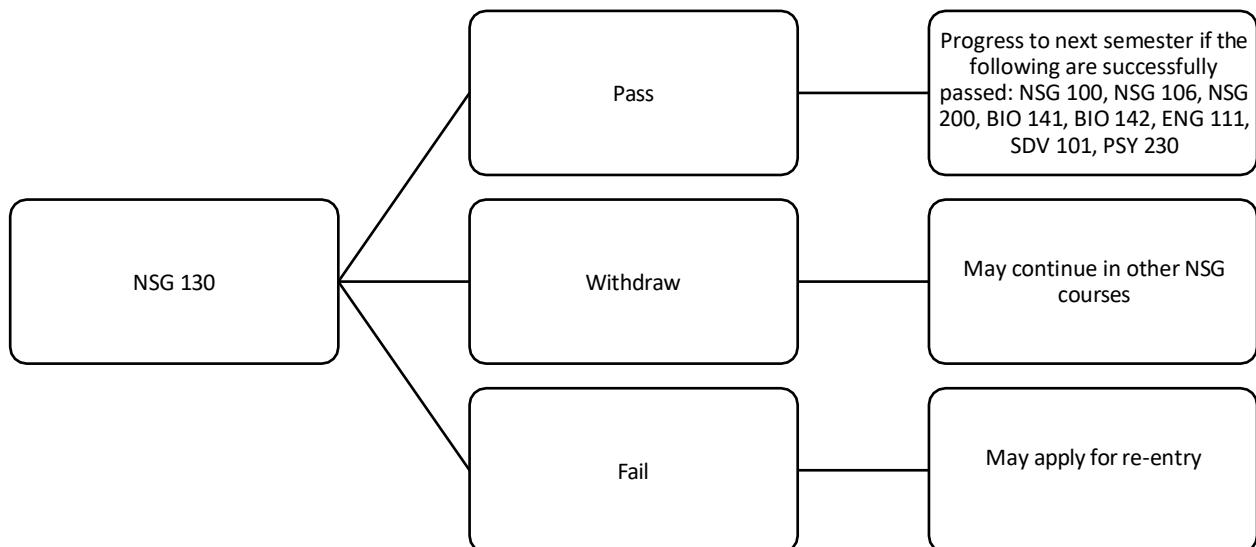
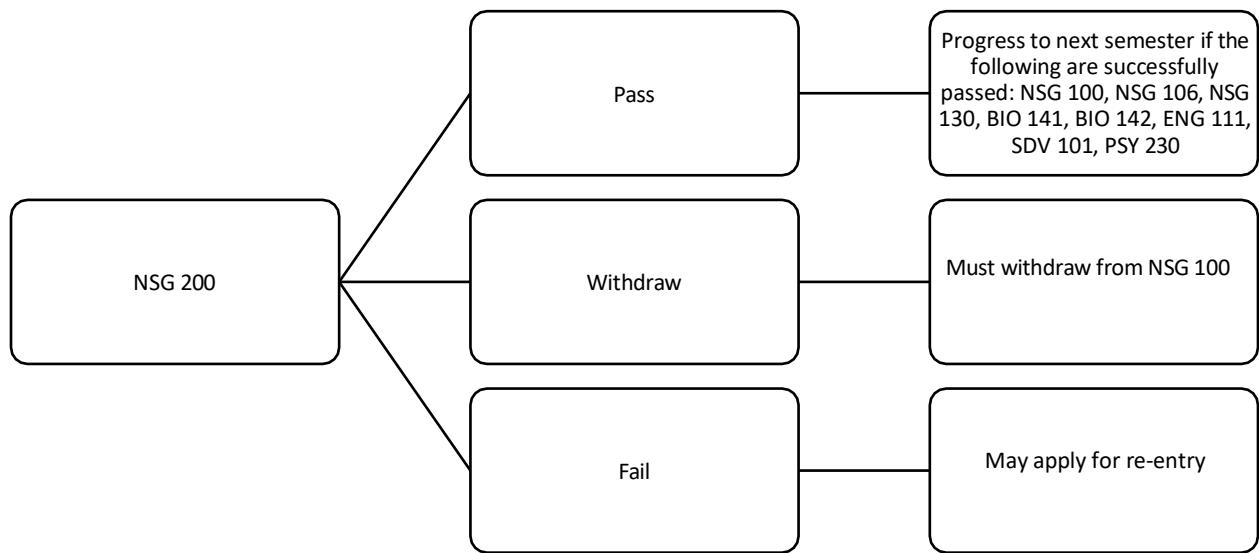
Course failure

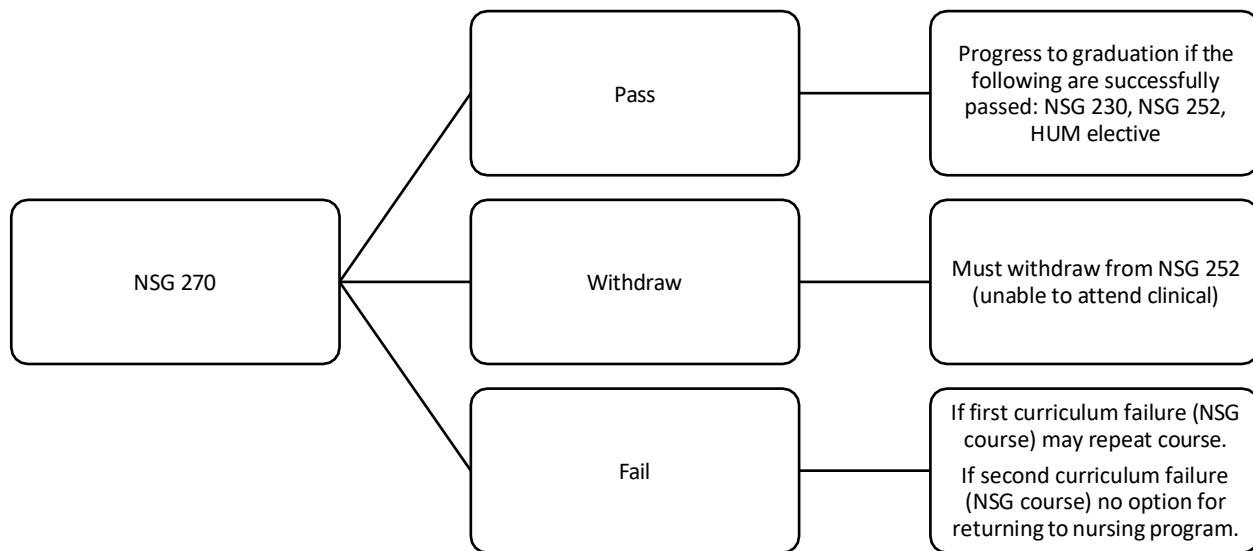
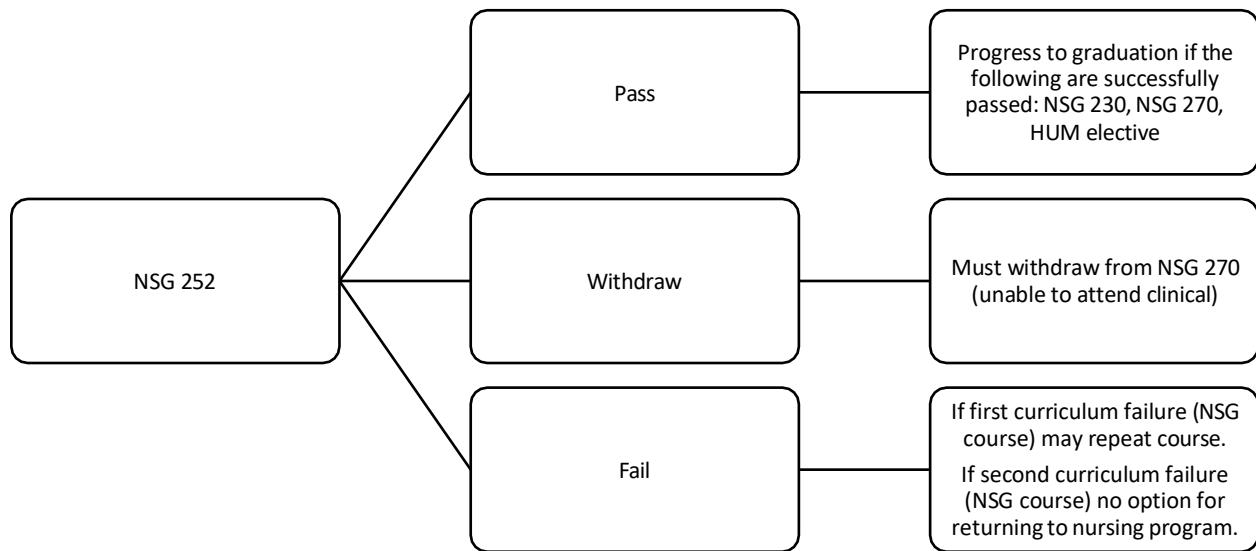
Nursing course failure is defined as earning a grade of "D" or "F" in any nursing course.

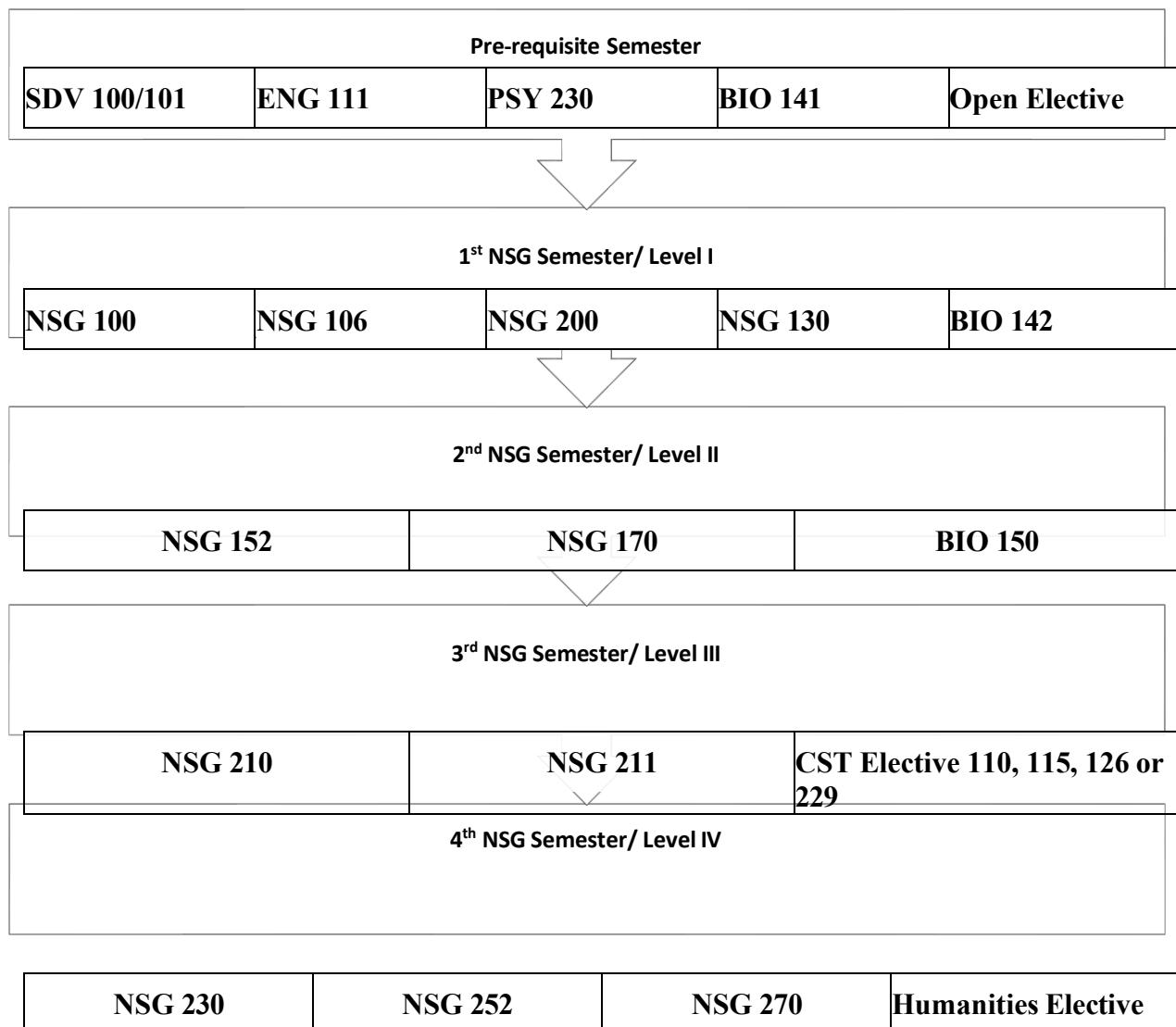
- Students who earn a "W", "D", or "F" in any course(s) are exited from the program and may apply for re-entry. Re-entry is competitive and based on availability (See Re-entry Policy.)
- Two or more course failures in the same semester count as one program exit.
- Students may attempt any nursing course a maximum of two times. A grade of "W" counts as one attempt.
- Students who earn a "W", "D", or "F" in any course are allowed only one program exit.
- A final grade of "U" in any clinical or lab component results in a final course grade no higher than a "D" in that course. The entire course must be repeated.
- A nursing course may be repeated only once. Students who do not earn a "C" or better on the second attempt are not eligible for re-entry.

Progression algorithms for Levels 1 and 4









Math competency

Drug dosage calculation (DDC) competency is an expectation in each level of the nursing program.

- Math competency is defined as earning a grade of 90% or higher on the DDC exam.
- Students have 3 attempts to pass the DDC exam.
- Upon failure, students are required to remediate before their next attempt.
- Students in NSG 106 who fail to meet the math competency requirement, will fail the course with a grade of D.
- Students in Levels 2, 3 or 4 who do not pass the DDC exam in three (3) attempts are deemed unsafe to administer medications in clinical. Therefore, the clinical objectives could not be met, and the student will be administratively withdrawn.
- Students who retake a course that does not administer the respective level DDC testing must take and pass the DDC test as part of the re-entry requirements.

Re-entry policy

Re-entry is not guaranteed. It depends on both eligibility and space in the program. Any written behavioral warnings or code of conduct violations will be taken into consideration and may result in denial of program re-entry.

To be eligible for re-entry, the student must:

- have completed an Exit Interview at the time of withdrawal or course failure.
- have a curricular or cumulative GPA of 2.0 or higher.
- meet the current standardized entrance exam requirements.
- be compliant with all clinical requirements listed in DISA. If there has been a gap of more than one semester, a drug screen and a criminal background check must be completed.

To apply for re-entry, students must complete the following steps:

1. Submit a formal request via email to the Nursing Program Dean or their designee.
2. Demonstrate competency in clinical skills up to the semester they are re-entering.
3. When applicable, pass the respective DDC exam, as outlined in the Math Competency section of this Handbook.
4. Purchase all current program resources and materials.

Additional requirements may apply.

Students who take leave due to pregnancy under Title IX may return with the same academic status they had before the leave. This type of leave does not count as a course failure or as a re-entry if the return occurs within one year.

Transfer students policy

Transfer refers to the process of entering NOVA's nursing program after beginning nursing coursework at another VCCS accredited ADN program.

To be considered for transfer, a student must:

- have successfully completed at least one semester in an accredited RN program within the Virginia Community College System (VCCS). Only VCCS coursework will be considered for transfer credit.
- be in good academic standing at their current school.
- submit a letter of recommendation from the Dean.
- submit official transcripts for evaluation and course placement.
- meet all current NOVA Nursing Program requirements.
- email a notarized documentation of all completed clinical hours to the Dean or their designee.
- have a cumulative GPA of 2.5 or higher at the time of transfer.
- complete a transfer interview with the Dean or their designee.
- apply to both NOVA and the Nursing Program.
- pass the required entrance exam.

Program Expenses

Required purchases

1. American Heart Association BLS (AED/CPR) for Health Care Providers
2. Criminal background check
3. Drug screen
4. Immunizations, physical exam, and other clinical requirements
5. Health insurance coverage
6. Student professional liability insurance coverage
7. Computer or laptop equipped with a camera, microphone, and speaker.
8. NCLEX-RN Licensure Fees
9. NCLEX-RN review program in the 4th semester
10. NOVA Parking Permit
11. Nursing Skills Kit
12. Penlight
13. Stethoscope
14. Blood pressure cuff (sphygmomanometer)
15. Textbooks and instructional resources
16. Uniform/shoes/lab coat/program patch
17. Watch with second hand
18. Clinical agency expenses
19. Nursing Pin/Pinning Ceremony

Optional purchases

1. Graduation Cap/Gown
2. Membership, National Student Nurses Association (NSNA)

Program expenses

For a current list of program expenses, refer to the [NOVA Nursing Division](#) website.

Classroom Policies

Learning Environment

The Nursing Program is committed to fostering a respectful, safe, and professional learning environment where all students feel welcomed and supported. Students are expected to attend and participate actively, complete their own work, minimize distractions, communicate respectfully, and demonstrate accountability and ethical behavior. Collaboration, openness to diverse perspectives, and adaptability to new ideas are expected. Students should maintain the classroom and college property in good condition. These program-wide expectations provide general guidance; individual course syllabi outline specific policies and procedures.

Didactic course attendance

Regular attendance and active engagement are essential for academic success and help maximize learning. Students are expected to attend all classes, and attendance is recorded at every session. Students are responsible for any content they miss.

Recording of lectures

Students may record lectures only with the permission of the speaker. When allowed, the recording may be used only for individual study purposes. Electronic recording, use of cell phones or notes of any kind are not permitted during test review.

Assessments of learning

Student performance is evaluated through a variety of learning assessments. Faculty utilize both formative and summative approaches to support ongoing development and final evaluation of student achievement.

The nursing program utilizes Next Generation NCLEX® (NGN) style learning activities and assessments to prepare students for the current national licensure exam requirements. NGN-style assessments incorporate complex case studies and question types that evaluate clinical judgment, critical thinking, and decision-making in real-life scenarios.

Testing and Exam Policy

Attendance and testing makeup

Attendance is required for all forms of testing. Students are expected to take the tests/exams as scheduled.

A student can request a change of a testing date/time only in the following circumstances:

- A legal obligation, such as military service, or court date.
- Personal or family emergency.
- An exam conflict with another course.

If a student meets one of the above criteria and needs to test on an alternate date or time, the student must arrange this with the course faculty or designee prior to the originally scheduled testing time.

Students who fail to contact their course faculty in advance of the testing or exam session will be in violation of the MEC Academic Integrity policy.

Tardiness up to ten minutes leaves the student with only the remaining time to take the test. If a student is more than ten minutes late, they must complete a make-up test in the [MEC Testing Center](#).

Exam/test makeup

A missed exam/test must be taken within three (3) business days or prior to the next scheduled exam, whichever comes first. Make-up tests are comparable in format and difficulty and may contain a variety of question formats. A third absence from a testing session will result in a score of zero on that exam; no make-up tests will be given. An absence from the final exam may result in an Incomplete grade for the course.

Exam/test reviews

Students may review individual exams/tests with faculty by appointment only. Reviews will occur only after the exam is administered and before the next scheduled exam date. Students cannot review multiple past exams at the end of the course. The final exam will be available for review in the following semester.

Policy for on-campus testing

- A quiet environment will be maintained during the entire testing session.
- All tests and the final exam will be proctored.
- Audio recording or note taking is not permitted during a test or a test review session.
- Cell phones are only used for two-factor authentication, then must be turned off and secured.
- Faculty and students are honor-bound to report suspicions of cheating to the appropriate individuals (i.e., Dean of Nursing, and Dean of Students).
- If online testing is unavailable, all paper tests or exams are to be returned to the proctor before any students are permitted to leave the classroom.
- No hats may be worn during the testing session.
- Students are not to write down or otherwise reconstruct test questions in any manner.
- Students may be assigned a seat by the proctor, to ensure test security.
- Only the following items are permitted during a testing session: pencil or pen and eraser.
- Students will not discuss questions on an exam or test with other students who have not taken the exam or test.
- Students will remain seated until the testing session is completed.

Policy for remote testing

- Before starting a remote test, know your test schedule requirements (i.e., date/time/duration)
- Present a NOVA ID or other government issued picture ID
- Ensure you are alone and will not be interrupted
- Take the test/exam in a well-lit room (i.e., do not sit with your back to a window)
- Plan to remain at your computer for the duration of the test (no breaks)
- Turn off all other devices (e.g., tablets, phones, second computers, smart watches etc.).

- Nothing is allowed in your 360-degree environment unless specified by your faculty.
- To produce a high-quality webcam video, do the following:
 - Place the computer or device on a firm surface (a desk or table). Do not place the computer on your lap, a bed, or other surface where the device (or you) is likely to move.
 - If using a built-in webcam, avoid readjusting the tilt of the screen after the webcam setup is complete.
 - If using a stationary monitor, you are required to use a mirror to reflect your 360-degree environmental scan.
- Once you have logged on to your computer to take a quiz/test, follow the exact, onscreen directions given by the remote proctor program.
- If you encounter any technical difficulties during testing, the program has an internal, on-screen 24/7 Chat Line, follow the chat instructions for assistance.

Course grading

Grading Scale

A = 92 – 100%

B = 84 – 91%

C = 80 – 83%

D = 70 – 79%

F = 69.99% or below

To pass a nursing course, receive credit, and progress to the next semester, students must achieve a combined weighted average of 80% or higher across all unit tests, the final exam, assignments, and any required specialty exams. Refer to individual course syllabi for further details.

Individual test scores and the final numeric course grade are not rounded.

For courses with didactic, clinical, and campus laboratory components, students must successfully complete each component to pass the course.

Collaborative testing

Collaborative testing is a learning strategy used to foster knowledge development, critical thinking in decision-making, and group processing skills. Students will participate in collaborative testing immediately following their classroom exams. Students will be placed into random small groups and given a paper copy of the exam. The groups will have 30 minutes to re-take the exam. All group participants must agree on each answer. At the end of the 30 minutes, the exam and answer sheets will be collected for grading by the instructor. The grade will then become part of the summative assessment grade in the course.

Nursing Skills Laboratory

Introduction

The nursing skills lab is a simulated hospital setting and is utilized for a variety of student experiences. Nursing students have the opportunity to practice hands-on psychomotor nursing skills, under the guidance of faculty and nursing lab staff, so they build confidence and competence to perform in the clinical setting.

Students are required to complete the assigned readings, assignments (modules/AV materials), study guides, and quizzes, prior to their scheduled lab experience.

Laboratory attire

While in lab, students are required to wear either their nursing program uniform or professional attire, with a hip length white scrub jacket and name pin. The fit of clothing should allow for required movement of job performance without exposure of abdomen, chest, cleavage, thighs, or lower back. No shorts, open-toed shoes, midriff-baring tops, ripped clothing, or hats are allowed. Refer to the Clinical Policies section of this handbook for personal hygiene, hair, cosmetics, and jewelry guidelines.

Attendance

Attendance and punctuality are required for all nursing lab sessions. Labs provide essential hands-on practice to meet course competencies, and consistent attendance is necessary to successfully complete the course.

Expectations

- Students must attend all scheduled lab sessions.
- Attendance is documented in the Canvas LMS at each scheduled session.
- Any absence or tardiness must be communicated to the instructor prior to the start of the session.
- Missed labs must be made up within seven (7) days unless an extension is approved. Students must contact their course faculty and copy the Nursing Lab Manager to initiate make-up. The make-up includes all in-class components (didactic and skills).
- Make-up hours restore missed practice but do not erase the incident; progressive consequences apply.

Attendance violations are subject to the Progressive Disciplinary Policy for the Nursing Program.

Skills testing guidelines

1. Arrive on time for the scheduled lab session on the day of testing.
2. Bring the appropriate supplies and skill rubrics as posted in NSG course section on CANVAS.
3. Complete any preparatory activities as instructed.
4. Complete the nursing skill as indicated by the skills rubric.
5. If you make a mistake during a skills demonstration or test, notify your instructor right away and correct it either verbally or by repeating that part of the skill.
6. If applicable, document medications, vital signs, and assessments as directed.
7. Clean up the client area for the next student (see Housekeeping).
8. Feedback will be provided at the completion of the skill demonstration.

Remediation/retesting guidelines

- Students have three attempts to pass each skills test. If a student is unsuccessful on the first attempt, they will remediate with faculty or a designated remediation instructor.
- The student must contact the faculty or remediation instructor within 24 hours to schedule remediation and is expected to practice the skill in preparation for the next testing attempt.
- If the student is unsuccessful on the second attempt, they will meet with the Nursing Lab Manager and assigned faculty to discuss specific strategies for success before the third testing attempt.
- After an unsuccessful third attempt, the student will earn an 'F' grade on the skill and, as a result, in the corresponding course.
- Each remediation and subsequent attempt must be completed within seven (7) business days of the previous failed test, unless an extension is approved by faculty.

Open Skills Lab

During the semester, the skills lab is open various days and times for to practice skills already presented during scheduled sessions. The open labs are very busy, and space is limited. The scheduled open lab days/times will be posted by the nursing lab staff and are subject to change each semester. Reservations are made hourly by each individual student online.

Housekeeping

The nursing laboratory should be kept in good order and returned to an orderly fashion after use. Each student is responsible for ensuring the following are completed at the end of each learning session.

- A fitted sheet, with one pillow, top sheet and spread on each bed.
- Beds in the lowest position.
- Chairs pushed underneath the tables.
- Over-bed tables placed at the foot of each bed.
- Privacy curtains drawn back against the wall.
- Supplies returned to appropriate storage space.

Lab equipment is not to be removed from the campus nursing lab without the pre-approval of the Nursing Lab Manager.

Student's purchased nursing skills kit contains equipment that is for use in the nursing skill lab only under the supervision of faculty or lab instructors. Personal use of supplies on individuals outside the learning environment is prohibited.

Manikin care

The lab manikins are available to enhance the learning experience. In order to protect the equipment from permanent staining, only pencils are to be utilized when working with the Manikin.

Latex allergy

Any student with a known or suspected latex allergy is to notify the Nursing Lab Manager and their lab faculty prior to attending lab.

Food and drink

No eating is allowed in the nursing lab. Water, in a closed container, may be consumed in the instruction area only. The covered container must be kept on the desk or center table at all times to prevent spillage or damage to lab equipment.

Simulation expectations

Students will participate in simulation experiences throughout the curriculum. Simulations provide a safe, realistic environment that supports skill development, teamwork, and clinical judgment.

Before each session, students must review the objectives and complete any required pre-simulation assignments. During simulation, students may be assigned roles such as nurse, team leader, medication nurse, family member, or other healthcare provider. Some simulations use students as standardized patients.

Simulation is a safe space for learning and professional growth. Students are evaluated on performance and may be required to complete remediation if objectives are not met. After each simulation, students will participate in a debriefing session and complete an evaluation of the experience to support continuous improvement.

Clinical Policies

General information

The clinical site is where students participate in client care. The program uses a variety of clinical agencies in the Northern Virginia area, including primary, secondary, and tertiary settings. A current list can be found at the end of this handbook.

Students are expected to adhere to the policies and procedures of the clinical agency, including, but not limited to, confidentiality, client belongings, food and drink, cell phones/electronics, and safety. As outlined in the contracts between the participating agency and the college, clinical agencies have the following rights, with regard to student performance.

The Agency has and retains the responsibility for the supervision and care of all clients. In furtherance of this responsibility, it is understood and agreed that the clinical nursing faculty and the students shall observe the rules and regulations of the Agency. In the event of unsatisfactory performance by a nursing student, as determined solely by the Agency, the Agency maintains the right to remove the nursing student from clinical practice and shall notify the College faculty member responsible or the Associate Dean for Nursing so that appropriate action with respect to the student may be taken at once by the College.

Nursing students are accountable for their personal actions when in contact with clients. The Nurse Practice Act allows nursing students to perform professional actions without being awarded a license to practice professional nursing. The licensure exception places great accountability on the nursing student, since the same competent care that the reasonably prudent nurse would give, must also be the standard of care for the professional nursing student.

Students are legally and financially responsible if another person is injured or suffers loss because of their negligence. Clinical affiliate agreements require that students carry personal malpractice

insurance. Students must show a valid policy or letter from the insurance provider. Minimum coverage amounts are \$1,000,000 individual and \$6,000,000 aggregate. Policies must be in effect by the first clinical day unless otherwise addressed in the respective course syllabus.

Students are responsible for their own transportation to clinical agencies and may be required to pay parking fees. Additional requirements may be enforced, as requested by the clinical agency.

Clinical portfolio

Students are asked to maintain an up-to-date online clinical portfolio, containing all required documentation, in compliance with the clinical affiliate agreements. At the beginning of each clinical rotation, students' clinical portfolios will be reviewed by the clinical instructor. Students not in full compliance will be excused from the clinical site and will earn an 'Unsatisfactory' rating in all performance evaluation categories for that clinical day.

Nursing uniform and professional appearance

Professional appearance is required at all times during clinical assignments. The following items are mandatory for all clinical and simulation settings (Items 1–7 are available at the [MEC campus bookstore](#)):

1. One set of red scrubs (top and bottom) – required for clinical rotations at any INOVA facility
2. One set of the NOVA student uniform (white top and green pants) – required for most other clinical agencies
3. NOVA student name badge
4. NOVA Nursing Program patch
5. White color hip-length lab coat
6. All-white, non-porous shoes with closed toes and heels
7. Stethoscope
8. White socks (calf or knee-high)
9. White short-sleeved crew neck t-shirt or camisole
10. Second-hand watch

Some clinical sites may require business casual attire with a white lab coat, in lieu of a uniform. Some clinical sites provide photo IDs that must be worn along with the NOVA name badge. Clinical affiliate rules always supersede program requirements. Any required adaptations for specific clinical areas will be detailed in the course syllabus.

Additional Requirements:

- Scrubs must be properly fitted; pants should not touch the floor.
- A t-shirt under the scrub top is mandatory and must be plain white (no writing, pictures, or logos).
- During patient care, the lab jacket should either be removed or sleeves rolled up above the elbow.
- Ankle socks, clogs, or sandals are not permitted.
- When required, masks must be solid-colored and follow clinical site or CDC policies.
- Hair must be neat, clean, dry, and styled conservatively. Long hair must be restrained and off the shoulders. Hair accessories must be clean and natural in color.
- Fingernails must be clean, trimmed to no more than $\frac{1}{4}$ inch beyond the fingertip, with no polish or artificial nails.
- Personal hygiene must be impeccable. Body, breath, or tobacco odors are not acceptable.

- Jewelry is limited to a wristwatch with a second hand, a wedding band, and one simple post-type earring per earlobe. No visible body piercings are permitted. Ear gauges must be skin toned with plugs in place.
- Tattoos must be covered according to agency policy.
- Make-up should be conservative.
- Facial hair must be clean and trimmed within $\frac{1}{4}$ inch; otherwise, the face must be clean-shaven.
- No scented personal products (perfume, cologne, aftershave, musk) are permitted.
- Undergarments must be worn and not visible through the pants.
- No smoking, vaping, or consuming alcohol while in uniform.

Any student arriving at a clinical site in violation of the above standards will receive an “Unsatisfactory” rating in the Professional Behaviors category of the Daily Clinical Evaluation Tool (CET) and may be dismissed from the clinical assignment for that day.

Phone use

Personal cell phones are prohibited in clinical areas. Student nurses are not to make or receive personal phone calls on the agency telephone, unless approved by the instructor.

Clinical attendance

In accordance with Virginia Board of Nursing (VBON) regulation 18VAC90-27-100, nursing students are required to complete at least 500 hours of supervised direct patient care as part of their program coursework. To meet this requirement, student attendance in clinical is mandatory.

Students unable to attend clinical must notify their clinical faculty before the start of the scheduled clinical day. Any missed clinical time must be made up. It is the student’s responsibility to contact their clinical instructor and initiate the clinical make-up process. The date, time, location, and activity for the make-up will be based on available resources and may include simulation. Clinical make-ups within the semester are not guaranteed and may result in an Incomplete grade in the course.

A clinical absence that affects the student’s ability to perform any activity listed in the Nursing Program Essentials/Technical Standards requires health provider clearance. The provider’s note must explicitly state the date the student may return to clinical at full capacity.

Clinical attendance is evaluated under the Professional Behaviors category of the Daily Clinical Evaluation Tool (CET). Tardiness, absences, and no call/no show all result in an “Unsatisfactory” rating of Professional Behaviors.

If a student misses a clinical day due to an unexcused absence or no call/no show, an “Unsatisfactory” rating will be assigned in all seven CET areas for that date. Once the missed hours are made up, the ratings related to clinical performance may be changed back to “Satisfactory”. The Professional Behaviors rating will remain “Unsatisfactory” because the attendance policy was not met.

Clinical Hours Tracking

Students must track all clinical hours in the online system [Trajecsyst](#). Students must clock in at the start of each clinical assignment and clock out at the end. Lunch breaks do not count toward cumulative clinical hours and require a clock out/in. Each student is responsible for checking their own Trajecsyst report to ensure all required hours are complete.

[Incident and infections exposure policy](#)

While in the clinical setting, if a student is exposed to an infectious agent or receives an injury, they are to immediately report the incident to their clinical instructor.

Exposure policies of the clinical affiliate are to be followed by the affected student. These may include Hepatitis B & C, HIV, and TB testing. Students will be required to incur the cost of testing and treatment, and should obtain these tests via their personal care physician or other outpatient facilities.

In case of an incident/infectious exposure, the student must complete an [Incident Report Form - Students/Visitors](#) (Form 125-088), as well as [Health Technologies Division Incident /Infection Exposure Report](#) (Form 125-087). A letter from the healthcare provider indicating the student may return to clinical must be submitted prior to resuming any clinical activities.

[Clinical performance evaluation procedure](#)

The Virginia Community College System (VCCS) has set criteria that students must meet to successfully complete a clinical course. These are referred to as Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) and focus on seven areas of clinical competency performance: (1) Client-Centered Care, (2) Safety, (3) Clinical Judgment, (4) Professional Behaviors, (5) Quality Improvement and Technology, (6) Collaboration, and (7) Pharmacology. The NOVA Nursing Program Clinical Evaluation Tool (CET) is used to document student performance in each area.

Daily Clinical Evaluation Tool (Daily CET): Student performance is evaluated at the end of each clinical session using the Daily CET. Ratings include Satisfactory (S), Needs Improvement (NI), and Unsatisfactory (U).

An “U” rating in any competency may trigger a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) with assigned remediation.

Final Clinical Evaluation Tool (Final CET): The Final CET is completed by the student (self-evaluation) and the clinical instructor at the end of the rotation. Competencies are rated based on cumulative Daily CET ratings, completion of all clinical assignments, and any assigned PIPs. Unsatisfactory ratings in any competency count toward that competency’s Final CET rating. To successfully pass the clinical portion of the course, students must earn a Satisfactory (S) rating in all seven competencies.

Faculty/Student Communication

Northern Virginia Community College (NVCC) faculty, staff, and administrators communicate with students through their official NVCC email account (@nvcc.edu). Students are likewise required to use their VCCS email accounts (@email.vccs.edu) to communicate with instructors and other college personnel and should check their email accounts regularly.

Student Involvement in Governance

The nursing faculty supports and encourages nursing students to participate in the governance process at NOVA. In addition to the National Student Nurses Association (NSNA), there are opportunities to serve as a student representative on the following standing program committees: Curriculum, Students, and Resources. In addition, there are campus- and college-wide committees as part of [Student Life at NOVA](#) that solicit student participation.

Student Grievances

The NOVA Nursing Program follows the college's [Student Grievance Procedure](#) (608P) for resolving student grievances. Informal resolution is encouraged whenever possible. Students' rights are protected throughout the process, and retaliation is strictly prohibited.

Emergency Procedures and Inclement Weather

One of the most important ways to be prepared for an emergency is to have multiple means of receiving emergency information. Students are asked to sign up for the [NOVA Alert](#) notification service and review the [Office of Emergency Management and Safety](#) webpage on the NOVA site for important details.

The Nursing Program follows NOVA's [color-coded system](#) to communicate class delays and cancellations. Clinical activities follow the same schedule.

Financial Aid

Students receiving financial aid are expected to attend and complete all classes. Withdrawing from a class may impact financial aid status and may require repayment. Visit the [Financial Aid](#) page on the NOVA website for more information.

The Office of Wellness and Mental Health

A variety of wellness and mental health resources, support, and interventions are available to students through the NOVA [Office of Wellness and Mental Health](#). A free telehealth program known as [TimelyCare](#) provides 24/7 access to virtual mental health care.

Title IX

Title IX is a civil rights law that prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in educational programs, activities, admission, and employment. Complaints of sex-based discrimination, sexual violence, domestic violence, dating violence, and sexual or gender-based harassment are governed by the Title IX Policy. Information on Title IX can be found [here](#).

Medical Education Campus Resources

Academic advising

Students entering or re-entering the program are assigned a nursing faculty advisor whose role is to assist with academic and matriculation matters. Students are responsible for contacting their advisor each semester and reviewing their [Academic Requirements](#) before the meeting.

[MEC advisors](#) are also available to assist students with academic success coaching, exploring transfer, and career opportunities.

Student Services

An excellent staff of professional counselors is available to assist students with problems of a personal nature, such as those related to home, family, social life, or finances. Counseling Center resources may be accessed through MEC Student Services at the Medical Education Campus.

Financial assistance

There are several sources of financial assistance available to students in the Nursing Program. Rather than seeking full-time employment, students are encouraged to utilize these sources as needed. Students may apply for assistance at any time while in the program. For further information, contact, the Financial Aid/Veteran Affairs Advisor at the MEC visit the [Apply for Financial Aid](#) link on the NOVA website.

Library resources

The [MEC Library](#) is part of a large network of NOVA libraries that offers nursing books, journals, media, and a wide range of electronic resources, including major health databases such as Medline, Health Reference Center Academic, and CINAHL. These resources are available on campus and remotely to all students. The library also provides group study rooms, quiet study areas, and a computer lab with Microsoft Office.

All new nursing students complete a required library orientation, and short workshops are offered throughout the year. Librarians are available and happy to help you find materials for your coursework.

Open Computer Lab

The [MEC Open Computer Lab](#) (OCL) is located on the third floor (HE-343), next to the library. It provides access to computers for students working on assignments. The OCL computers are equipped with MS Office Suite as well as specialized software. All students in the Nursing and Allied Health programs share this lab. When available, all students should attend an orientation to this lab.

The NOVA College provides many additional resources to support students. These can be accessed through the [Student Resources](#) link on the college website.

Medical Education Campus Medical Health Policy

Overview

The Medical Health Policy offers guidance for handling major medical emergencies, severe extended illnesses, or other health conditions occurring during the semester of registration that require hospitalization, are life-threatening, prevent class attendance, or pose a contagious threat to the College community.

Policy

When the Medical Health Policy is invoked, students may seek accommodations through Accommodations and Accessibility Services and/or the Title IX office. The student must provide the Program Director or Associate Dean of the Division ("college official") with the MOA or Title IX letter as soon as possible. Students missing class or clinical time must arrange accommodations to make up the missed work.

If a faculty member is concerned about the health or safety of a student based on observed behaviors, it is acceptable for the faculty member and/or the Program Director or Associate Dean to inquire about the student's ability to participate in program activities by speaking with the student, but only when it pertains to their classroom learning activities, clinical experiences, and the student's successful completion of the course and the program.

Faculty must refer students to NOVA's Accommodations and Accessibility Services ("AAS") if a student indicates a need for accommodation due to a serious medical condition or physical or mental disability.

Faculty must refer pregnant students to the Title IX Office ("Title IX") if a student indicates a need for accommodation. Pregnant students may be entitled to academic accommodations based on temporary medical conditions and symptoms due to pregnancy. Accommodations vary pertaining to the student's specific conditions as well as the academic program in which the student is enrolled. The Title IX Coordinator will engage with pregnant students and faculty to identify appropriate and reasonable accommodations on a case-by-case basis. The Title IX Office will collect and maintain any student health records required for the Title IX accommodation process.

MEC Programs Clinical Experiences

The programs at the MEC are rigorous classes and have mandatory scheduled clinical components. These clinical experiences have limited abilities to be rescheduled outside of the scheduled times during the semester at the MEC.

- Didactic and Lab coursework - If a student misses coursework, they should refer to the program's absence-related policy.
- Clinical experiences—Clinical experiences may be difficult to reschedule outside of the scheduled times during the semester at the MEC. If MEC programs can reschedule this missed clinical work, which may extend beyond the semester, the student will receive an "Incomplete" and finish the clinical work prior to the next semester's start date. If the ability to make up clinical work is not available for a program, the student will need to complete the clinical hours the following semester before progressing to the next level.

Accommodations and Accessibility Services and Title IX Office

The Accommodations and Accessibility Services and/or Title IX Office will review appropriate medical documentation, including the physician's updated review of programmatic technical standards, prior to issuing written documentation for student return or outlining students' accommodations. Faculty are not permitted to provide academic accommodations ad hoc or informally. All accommodations are provided by only the Accommodations and Accessibility Services and the Title IX Office of the College.

The student is required to disclose to faculty if they have a major medical emergency, severe extended illness, or any other health condition occurring during or extending into the semester in which the student is registered which requires hospitalization, is life threatening, prevents the student from attending classes, or is contagious and a danger to the remainder of the College community. Medical details do not need to be disclosed. The student will be referred to either the Accommodations and Accessibility Services and/or Title IX Office for review of appropriate accommodations if needed. The student is solely responsible for registering on time, completing required course work, following universal precautions, maintaining health clearance requirements required for clinicals, and for maintaining academic and behavioral standards of the program. If a student is unable to meet these requirements, with or without appropriate accommodation, or if the ability to make up missed clinical work is not available, the student may utilize the option to withdraw after the published withdrawal deadline due to mitigating circumstances by submitting the Late Withdrawal for Mitigating Circumstances (Form 125-047).

NOTE: Qualification for late withdrawal may have varying academic and financial impact and consequences. Students who qualify for late withdrawals under this policy may or may not be entitled to any reimbursement, refund, or forgiveness of tuition debt owed for such courses and should consult with the appropriate the Financial Aid office as to any financial impact withdrawing has upon student financial aid or the student's account.

This Medical Health Policy is a supplement by any or all program specific policies or protocols that apply to all program-based students as stated in the program handbook.

Medical Education Campus-Marijuana Policy

Overview

The Federal Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act – also known as the Drug-Free Schools and Campuses Act—prohibits the use of controlled substances, including marijuana. Possession of marijuana or its use in any form (recreational or medicinal) is not permitted on any of the Northern Virginia Community College's (NOVA) campuses or during sponsored activities as a condition of compliance with Federal Law. Any violation of the Drug Free Schools and Communities Act, or facilitation of or acquiescence to a violation of the Controlled Substances Act, will jeopardize NOVA's eligibility to participate in financial aid programs administered by the U.S. Department of Education. A student convicted of an offense involving the possession of a controlled substance prior to or during a period of school enrollment in which federal financial aid was received, is ineligible to receive federal student aid for specified periods of time, depending on the egregiousness of the offense.

Policy

Students are prohibited from the manufacturing, distribution, dispensing, possession, or use of (recreational or medicinal) marijuana, as defined under the Federal Drug Free Schools and Communities Act, anywhere on property belonging to Northern Virginia Community College (NOVA), including, but not limited to, grounds, parking areas, anywhere within the building or facilities, or while participating in NOVA's academic activities.

This prohibition applies to medicinal (as prescribed by a provider) as well as recreational use. In most programs on the Medical Education Campus, students are required to pass a drug screen(s) conducted by a third-party vendor, Castlebranch, as part of the admissions process to participate in clinical experiences throughout the outlined programmatic curricula. Clinical site partners typically hold students to the same or similar standards as it requires of its employees, including its drug-use policies. Students remain responsible for ensuring that they can satisfy the requirements for clinical placement as provided by the placement site—and are on notice that failure to do so may result in the students' inability to progress in the Program in a timely manner or prevent degree completion. Any student seeking an exception to the drug screen policy or requirements based on a qualified disability or other required accommodation must seek individual review by contacting NOVA's Accommodations and Accessibility Services. Students are encouraged to seek such review as soon as possible to avoid delays in program progression or completion. In this case, the College will provide an individual review and consideration related to such a request and related to clinical affiliates' requirements for participation. Students found in violation of the College's policies related to drug-use are subject to disciplinary actions to include dismissal from their program of study, and/or expulsion from the college.

Progressive Disciplinary System for the Nursing Program

The NOVA Nursing Program utilizes a progressive disciplinary system that applies a series of more severe penalties for subsequent violations of set policies, standards, guidelines, and procedures.

This disciplinary process is intended to educate the student in identifying and correcting inappropriate behaviors, promoting the high ethical standards of professionalism, and ensuring a safe learning environment dedicated to patient safety in the clinical setting.

Failure to conform to any of the below policies, standards, guidelines, and procedures may result in one or a combination of the following actions:

- 1. Educational Talk/FYI:** A verbal notification is provided to the student that their behavior, actions, and performance is unacceptable; stronger disciplinary actions may result if the issue persists. Faculty will document this as an FYI in the College's Maxient system by completing the [Student Conduct Form](#) for those noted below with an asterisk (*) in the chart below.
- 2. Written/Disciplinary warning:** A formal written agreement between the student and program personnel that lists specific behaviors, actions, or unacceptable performances that must be corrected and the designated timeframe for the correction(s). Faculty will additionally document behaviors in the College's Maxient system by completing the [Student Conduct Form](#). Asterisked items are considered violations of the VCCS student code of conduct and will be further investigated by the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities.

3. Remediation Plan/Performance Improvement Plan (PIP): A written report and last resort for those students who continue to display inappropriate behaviors considered severe.

All actions are documented by the program for academic violations (non-asterisk items in the chart below) or via a the Student Conduct form for behavioral violations (asterisk items in the chart below).

All students have the right to a due process (defined in “Key Terms”). Further information about the due process is noted below the tiered chart.

TIER I OFFENSES (Eligible for One Time Competitive Readmission)	MAXIMUM PENALTY 1st OFFENSE	MAXIMUM PENALTY 2nd OFFENSE	MAXIMUM PENALTY 3rd OFFENSE	READMISSION ELIGIBILITY
*Smoking or eating in unauthorized areas to include vaping and smokeless tobacco.	Educational Talk/FYI	Written warning/Disciplinary warning	Administratively withdrawn	Readmission with a Remediation plan/PIP
*Non-compliance of policy for appearance/dress code/personal hygiene – includes smelling of smoke	Educational Talk/FYI	Written warning/Disciplinary warning	Administratively withdrawn	Readmission with a Remediation plan/PIP
*Failure to follow the chain of command	Educational Talk/FYI	Written warning/Disciplinary warning	Administratively withdrawn	Readmission with a Remediation plan/PIP
*Use of abusive or obscene language	Educational Talk/FYI	Written warning/Disciplinary warning	Administratively withdrawn	Readmission with a Remediation plan/PIP
Indifference or rudeness to patients, staff, faculty, or other students	Educational Talk/FYI	Written warning	Administratively withdrawn	Readmission with a Remediation plan/PIP
Failure to adhere to Clinical Education Affiliate Rules and Regulations provided in the NOVA Nursing Clinical Policies (except behaviors that meet criteria for automatic dismissal as described below)	Educational Talk/FYI	Written warning	Administratively withdrawn	Readmission with a Remediation plan/PIP
*Using cell phones/text messaging/smartwatches/having phone out during class/clinic/labs.	Educational Talk/FYI	Written warning/Disciplinary warning	Administratively withdrawn	Readmission with a Remediation plan/PIP
Violating the NOVA Nursing Skills Laboratory Policies	Educational Talk/FYI	Written warning	Administratively withdrawn	Readmission with a Remediation plan/PIP

TIER II OFFENSES (NOT Eligible for Program Readmission)	MAXIMUM PENALTY 1st OFFENSE	MAXIMUM PENALTY 2nd OFFENSE	MAXIMUM PENALTY 3rd OFFENSE	READMISSION ELIGIBILITY
Failure to follow the patient's care plan, professional standards or agency policies impacting patient safety (including, but not limited to, med admin, fall prevention, infection control, skin management, assessment and monitoring, etc.)	Educational Talk/FYI	Written Warning	Interim Removal Status with possible ultimate Program Dismissal	Ineligible for readmission
Failure to complete safety checks prior to performing interventions, including, but not limited to, failure to use two patient identifiers, confirm allergies, verify correct procedure, and 5 rights.	Educational Talk/FYI	Written Warning	Interim Removal Status with possible ultimate Program Dismissal	Ineligible for readmission
Failure to escalate acute critical change in patient condition within the student's current level of academic knowledge	Educational Talk/FYI	Written Warning	Interim Removal Status with possible ultimate Program Dismissal	Ineligible for readmission
Inaccurate or incomplete documentation leading to clinical detriment to patient	Educational Talk/FYI	Written Warning	Interim Removal Status with possible ultimate Program Dismissal	Ineligible for readmission
Failure to comply with clinical instructor directions (except behaviors outlined in separate categories)	Educational Talk/FYI	Written Warning	Interim Removal Status with possible ultimate Program Dismissal	Ineligible for readmission
Any action (commission or omission) deemed grossly inappropriate in patient care or potentially harmful	Educational Talk/FYI	Written Warning	Interim Removal Status with possible ultimate Program Dismissal	Ineligible for readmission

Failure to escalate a patient or family concern or grievance	Educational Talk/FYI	Written Warning	Interim Removal Status with possible ultimate Program Dismissal	Ineligible for readmission
Performing acts in the clinical setting without adequate training, or when competency has not been demonstrated.	Educational Talk/FYI	Written Warning	Interim Removal Status with possible ultimate Program Dismissal	Ineligible for readmission
Failing to meet mandatory immunization or health requirements when attending clinical.	Educational Talk/FYI	Written Warning	Interim Removal Status with possible ultimate Program Dismissal	Ineligible for readmission
No Call: No Show	Educational Talk/FYI	Written Warning	Interim Removal Status with possible ultimate Program Dismissal	Ineligible for readmission
TIER III OFFENSES: (NOT Eligible for Program Readmission)	MAXIMUM PENALTY 1st OFFENSE			
Abandonment or misappropriation of time during clinical rotations	Interim Removal Status with possible ultimate Program Dismissal	----	----	Ineligible for readmission
Written request by clinical administration for removal of student from clinical site for behavioral, performance, and/or safety reasons	Interim Removal Status with possible ultimate Program Dismissal	----	----	Ineligible for readmission
*Under the influence of any substance that inhibits cognitive ability in class or clinic	Interim Removal Status with possible ultimate Program	----	----	Ineligible for readmission

	Dismissal			
*(Verbal or Physical) Threatening or fighting with faculty, other students, hospital employees, patients or visitors	Interim Removal Status with possible ultimate Program Dismissal	----	----	Ineligible for readmission
Bullying supervisors, patients, staff, faculty, other students, others.	Interim Removal Status with possible ultimate Program Dismissal	----	----	Ineligible for readmission
Stalking or harassment of supervisors, patients, staff, faculty, other students, others.	Covered under Title IX; possible emergency removal and/or ultimate Program Dismissal			Ineligible for readmission pending adjudication process outcome
*Falsification of academic records	Interim Removal Status with possible ultimate Program Dismissal	----	----	Ineligible for readmission
Falsification of clinical records	Interim Removal Status with possible ultimate Program Dismissal	----	----	Ineligible for readmission
*Insubordination - refusal to comply with reasonable instructions from an authorized supervisor/faculty/clinical instructor	Interim Removal Status with possible ultimate Program Dismissal	----	----	Ineligible for readmission
Disclosure of privileged and/or confidential information – includes HIPAA violations	Interim Removal Status with possible ultimate Program	----	----	Ineligible for readmission

	Dismissal			
*Illegal use of prescription drugs and/or other intoxicants on campus or in clinic. NOVA has the right to mandate random drug screens	Interim Removal Status with possible ultimate Program Dismissal		----	Ineligible for readmission
*Acting in a manner that endangers patients/staff/faculty/other students.	Interim Removal Status with possible ultimate Program Dismissal	----	----	Ineligible for readmission

***An asterisk in the chart above indicates a violation of the Virginia Community College System (VCCS) Student Code of Conduct. Faculty will report this behavior to the [Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities](#) through a Maxient report.**

Appeal Process

Appeal Process for Behavioral Violations:

Refer to the [VCCS Code of Conduct](#) for the behavioral violations noted above by the asterisk.

Appeal Process for Academic Violations:

The following is the academic due appeal process (non-asterisk items) should a student choose to pursue:

1. A student who is not satisfied with the outcome within five (5) business days of the issuance of the determination notice, may submit a written appeal of the decision to the Academic Dean. The Academic Dean will review all documents relating to the offence, and consider any evidence submitted by the student, and render a decision within five (5) business days of receipt of the written appeal. The student will be notified of the decision via VCCS email.
2. A student who is not satisfied with the decision of the Academic Dean may request a review by the Provost within five (5) business days of receipt of the Academic Dean's decision. No new evidence will be considered. Within five (5) business days, the Provost will review the actions that have already taken place and render a decision. The student will be notified in writing of the decision via VCCS email. The decision of the Provost is final.
3. Deadlines may be extended by mutual written agreement; however, the Provost has the authority to extend deadlines at any level of the process.
4. Once the student has exhausted this appeal process, the student has no right to file a student grievance about a course grade or other sanction (including a dismissal).

***Failure to submit a timely appeal will result in the sanction remaining in effect.**

During the appeal process, the student must abide by the limitations established by the outlined sanction (as to course, lab, clinical attendance) and may not otherwise participate in college activities except for those related to the academic grievance process set forth herein regarding the underlying charge.

If, because of the process set forth herein, the student is found cleared of the charges and not responsible for an offense, then the student will be able to make up any missed assessments/assignments. However, depending on when during the academic term the issue giving rise to the conduct charge occurs or is discovered, a student's offense, even if lifted, may result in a disruption to the normal program progression depending on the circumstances. The Program Director or Associate Dean will work with the student and the student's faculty to arrange for this make-up. Please note that clinical make-up days will be determined by site and/or faculty availability.

*Please note that the VCCS Student Code of Conduct appeal process and the Title IX office will follow their individual appeal processes. Student grievances will follow the [NOVA Student Grievance Policy/Procedure](#)

Please refer to the VCCS Code of Conduct (Student Code of Conduct | Northern Virginia Community College for behavioral violations noted by the asterisk (*).

Student Records

The NOVA Nursing Program maintains student records in compliance with the federal, state and college regulations. NOVA College policy [613P](#) describes the process for maintenance, storage, and confidentiality of student records and the circumstances under which the institution may release information - all in accordance with the [VCCS Policy Manual](#).

Clinical Agency Directory

ACCA-CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER 7200 Columbia Pike Annandale, VA 22003 PHONE: 703-256-0100	DOMINION HOSPITAL 2960 Sleepy Hollow Rd. Falls Church VA 22044 PHONE: 703-538-2880
Fairfax County Health Department 10777 Main Street, Suite 320 Fairfax, VA 22030 (703)578-1000	Fauquier Health Department 330 Hospital Drive Warrenton, VA 20186 PHONE: 5403476363
FAIRFAX COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF NEIGHBORHOOD AND COMMUNITY SERVICES 12000 Government Center Parkway, Suite 270 Fairfax, VA 22035 PHONE: 703-324-5176	GOODWIN HOUSE – ALEXANDRIA 4800 Fillmore Ave. Alexandria, VA 22311 PHONE: 703-578-1000
GOODWIN HOUSE – BAILEY'SCROSSROADS 3440 South Jefferson Street Bailey's Crossroads, VA 22041 PHONE: 703-820-1488	HCA RESTON HOSPITAL CENTER 1850 Town Center Parkway Reston, VA 20190 PHONE: 703-689-9000
INOVA ALEXANDRIA HOSPITAL 4320 Seminary Road Alexandria, VA 22304 PHONE: 703-504-3000	INOVA FAIR OAKS HOSPITAL 3600 Joseph Siewick Drive Fairfax, VA 22033 PHONE: 703-391-3600
INOVA FAIRFAX HOSPITAL 3300 Gallows Road Falls Church, VA 22046 PHONE: 703-776-4001	INOVA LOUDOUN HOSPITAL 44045 Riverside Parkway Leesburg, VA 20176 PHONE: 703-858-6000
INOVA MOUNT VERNON HOSPITAL 2501 Parkers Lane Alexandria, VA 22306 PHONE: 703-664-7000	LOUDOUN NURSING & REHABILITATION CENTER 235 Old Waterford Road Northwest Leesburg, VA 20176 PHONE: 703-771-2841
MANASSAS PARK CITY SCHOOLS 1 Park Center Ct Suite A Manassas Park, VA 20111 PHONE: 703-392-1317	NORTHERN VIRGINIA MENTAL HEALTH INSTITUTE 3302 Gallows Road Falls Church, VA 22042 PHONE: 703-207-7100
UVA PRINCE WILLIAM HOSPITAL 8700 Sudley Road Manassas, VA 20110 PHONE: 703-369-8000	SENTARA NORTHERN VIRGINIA MEDICAL CENTER 2300 Opitz Boulevard Woodbridge, VA 22191 PHONE: 703-523-1000
VIRGINIA HOSPITAL CENTER 1701 N. George Mason Dr. Arlington, Virginia 22205 PHONE: 703-558-5000	

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Code of Virginia § 54.1-3017. Qualifications of applicant for registered nurse's license; examination; graduates of foreign nursing education programs. <https://www.dhp.virginia.gov/>

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Clinical Student Contract:

I _____ accept the responsibility to uphold the highest standard of professional conduct at all times. My signature below serves as an agreement to the following:

I have reviewed the clinical outcomes criteria for this course. I understand that my clinical performance will be evaluated based on my ability to successfully achieve these outcomes. Therefore, I will come to clinical prepared and will exhibit a commitment to learning and an attitude of enthusiasm, cooperation, and self-direction.

I agree to arrive at clinical on time. I will never leave my patient or the clinical site without permission from my instructor.

I will ensure client safety at all times. I understand that any action on my part that is harmful or potentially harmful to the client, myself, my colleagues, or members of the interdisciplinary team is considered unsafe and may result in my immediate removal from clinical and/or failure of the course. Examples of actions to promote clinical safety include, but are not limited to:

- ✓ At the start of my clinical day, I will review my assigned clients' plan of care to include H&P, allergies, code status, type of support, presence of dysphagia, fall risk, infection control measures, lab and diagnostic results, provider orders, and other relevant information.
- ✓ Make client assessment a priority; complete all assigned tasks and activities timely and report abnormal assessment findings immediately.
- ✓ Follow safety measures such as proper client identification at each interaction, safe client handling during transfers, never leaving a client unattended unless deemed safe, and adhering to all components of the clients' care plan.
- ✓ Administer medications and treatments only under the direct supervision of the clinical instructor or designee. Demonstrate knowledge of all relevant pharmacokinetic properties and lab values and perform accurate drug dosage calculations.

I will conduct myself in a professional manner at all times. Examples of professional behaviors that I will uphold include, but are not limited to:

- ✓ Ensure strict confidentiality of all client information.
- ✓ Observe the NOVA Nursing Program clinical dress code policy at all times.
- ✓ Treat everyone with respect and unconditional regard.
- ✓ Receive constructive feedback with grace and dignity.
- ✓ Maintain honesty, rationality, and accountability in all interactions.
- ✓ Maintain forthrightness with peers and faculty, and handle conflicts objectively and professionally.
- ✓ Use the clinical time effectively and never engage in socializing or other acts of distraction in the client care setting.

I will adhere to all course, program, and college policies at all times.

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

Statement of Understanding

Receipt and Acceptance of Responsibility

One of the qualities we expect in each student is accountability – being responsible for your own actions. We request that you use this handbook along with the NOVA College Catalog and NOVA Student Handbook to assist you in understanding your responsibilities. Your advisor or instructor will be able to clarify any items or answer any questions regarding the policies within this handbook.

NOVA Nursing Statement of Understanding

I understand the requirements of the NOVA Nursing Program as stated in this handbook, the NOVA College Catalog, and the NOVA Student Handbook. When I begin a nursing course, it is my responsibility to clarify what I do not understand with the instructor. I will abide by the policies and guidelines presented in the NOVA Student Handbook, the NOVA College Catalog, and the NOVA Nursing Program Handbook

Honor Code

To prepare students for the high ethical standards of health professionals, the College expects absolute academic integrity, both in the classroom and in clinical practice.

Therefore, acts of cheating, attempted cheating, plagiarism, lying, stealing of academic work, which includes secured tests or related materials, papers purchased or written by others, or the failure to report an occurrence of academic dishonesty or any violation of this honor code may subject you to the MEC progressive disciplinary policy as defined in the NOVA Nursing Student Handbook.

I have read the above and agree to follow the Honor Code and NOVA Nursing Statement of Understanding.

Date: _____ Student name (PRINT): _____

Student ID: _____ Student signature: _____

Print this sheet, sign it, submit it to your Student Immunization Tracker account. A copy must be placed in your clinical portfolio in a page protector.

NOVA Nursing Student Performance Improvement Plan

Student Name:

Course:

Date:

The purpose of the Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) is to promote student success through timely intervention of unsatisfactory clinical performance. The PIP serves as a formal written contract between the student and the instructor and outlines the knowledge, skills or attitudes associated with the outcome criteria in need of remediation, the specific learning resources and strategies to address the deficiencies, as well as the timeframe and evidence of successful completion.

Description of unsatisfactory performance:

Student learning outcome criteria not met: (check all that apply)

- Patient Centered Care: Provide patient centered care promoting therapeutic relationships, caring behaviors, and self-determination across the lifespan for diverse populations.
- Safety: Practice safe nursing care that minimizes risk of harm across systems and client populations.
- Clinical Judgement: Integrate clinical judgment when collaborating with the healthcare team in the management of care for complex clients.
- Professional Behaviors: Practice professional behaviors that encompass the legal/ethical framework while incorporating self-reflection, leadership, and a commitment to recognize the value of life-long learning.
- Quality Improvement: Manage client care through quality improvement processes, information technology, and fiscal responsibility to meet client needs and support organizational outcomes.
- Collaboration: Demonstrate principles of collaborative practice within the nursing and interdisciplinary teams fostering mutual respect and shared decision-making to achieve stated outcomes of care.
- Pharmacology: Manage the appropriateness, accuracy, and client responses to pharmacology principles for clients with complex conditions.

Required activities to be completed:

Student has until _____ to complete the mutually agreed upon performance improvement plan.

Faculty signature:

Date:

Student signature:

Date:

Nursing Laboratory remediation (if applicable): Student must contact the laboratory remediation instructor to make an appointment and discuss the required activities to be completed.

Student completed _____ hours of remediation on _____

Lab instructor comments:

Lab instructor signature:

Date:

Student signature:

Date:

Faculty re-evaluation: Student completed the performance improvement plan as outlined

Yes

No*

Comments:

Faculty signature:

Date:

Student signature:

Date: