

VOCATIONAL NURSING STUDENT HANDBOOK



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MISSION STATEMENT

“Valley Grande Institute for Academic Studies is dedicated to providing excellence through a sense of pride, creativity, and innovation.”

Core Values: VGI Cares

- Value and Virtuous
- Generosity and Growth
- Innovation and Integrity
- Compassion and Cooperation
- Ambition and Achievement
- Respect and Resilience
- Empathy and Excellence
- Success and Service

VOCATIONAL NURSING PROGRAM PURPOSE

Valley Grande Institute for Academic Studies is dedicated to providing a vocational nursing education program focused on preparing students to become excellent nurses. The nurse's role is to address the physical, emotional, spiritual, mental, and social needs of those they serve. Students have opportunities in the classroom, laboratory, and clinical sites to become proficient nurses. Upon successful completion of the Vocational Nursing Program and all its requirements, students will be prepared to take the National Council Licensure Examination for Practical Nurses (NCLEX-PN). It is our sincere hope that the vocational nurse training program will be fulfilling and rewarding for you. We are here to assist you in achieving your goals. *Your positive attitude, determination, hard work, and perseverance are key to your success.*

Valley Grande Institute's Vocational Nursing Program and its policies are detailed in this student handbook. Students must read the handbook and familiarize themselves with the program's policies, which all nursing students must follow. Please keep this handbook for reference throughout the program. Please direct questions to the Vocational Nursing Director, a VN faculty member, or a school administrator. You may also refer to Valley Grande Institute's School Catalog for further information.

VOCATIONAL NURSING PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY

The Vocational Nursing Program at Valley Grande Institute for Academic Studies follows the belief that nursing integrates every aspect of individual and family care. It acknowledges that every person is a unique and complex being, composed of many interrelated components including biological, social, psychological, cultural, and spiritual characteristics. These components influence behavior, personality,

and health.

It's important to remember that good health means achieving a state of complete well-being - physically, mentally, emotionally, spiritually, and socially. When this balance is disturbed, people need healthcare. Nursing is crucial in helping people reach, maintain, and recover optimal health through various responsibilities. Vocational nursing is just one part of nursing and its knowledge and practice are based on a specific body of professional nursing knowledge and skills. Graduates of vocational nursing programs are essential members of healthcare teams.

Vocational nurses provide direct basic care to multiple clients in structured settings and assist with the coordination of care in collaboration with other healthcare professionals. These interdisciplinary teams may include physicians, nursing assistants, dietitians, physical, occupational or speech therapists, pharmacists, or others. The educational process for the vocational nurse is based on sound scientific principles and is designed to provide a foundation of skills upon which the nurse can build. Faculty members should inspire excellence through their role as facilitators and role models for students and provide learning experiences that target the learner's specific needs. Quality vocational nursing education occurs in an organized and conducive learning environment, encouraging the student to gain knowledge and become self-confident.

Excellence in vocational nursing education enables students to strive for success and provide safe, high-quality patient care during their nursing experiences. The Vocational Nursing Department acknowledges that only competent nurses who clearly utilize the nursing process will meet the nursing needs of individuals. The Vocational Nursing Program is committed to training its aspiring nurses to understand nursing techniques that will make them professional, proficient, and competent.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE VN PROGRAM

The mission of the National League for Nursing, adopted by Valley Grande Institute's Vocational Nursing program, is to promote excellence in nursing education, build a strong and diverse nursing workforce, and advance the nation's health.

The vocational nurse's role is important to any nursing staff. As a team member, the vocational nurse functions in the various modalities used to provide patient care, including primary care.

The objectives of the Vocational Nursing program, upon which the school's policies and practices are based, are as follows:

- To prepare qualified applicants to become Graduate Vocational Nurses who will be eligible to take the NCLEX Licensing Examination and, by successfully passing, become Licensed Vocational Nurses.

- To prepare good bedside nurses who, under the supervision of the registered professional nurse and/or licensed physicians, will be capable of performing and assisting with nursing procedures and providing quality care.
- To prepare the students and graduates to function effectively as members of the nursing profession, to their families, and their community through understanding the role of the vocational nurse and their responsibilities as a citizen and a nurse.
- To have the students and graduates become valuable members of the nursing and health care teams by developing their ability to work harmoniously with others to meet the needs of the patient and family.

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Any individual interested in attending Valley Grande Institute for Academic Studies should call or visit the school and ask for an Admissions Representative. The school's Admissions Representative will provide the necessary guidance to help them complete the admissions process. VGI is committed to assisting all prospective students throughout the entire admissions process.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Attendance is a vital professional responsibility for Vocational Nursing students and is necessary for achieving course objectives. It is expected that students attend all scheduled didactic, clinical, and laboratory sessions to fully grasp the nursing curriculum and to excel in the clinical setting.

While we understand that occasional absences may occur due to unexpected life events, it is crucial to minimize these absences to ensure a high-quality education.

The maximum allowable time for absences and tardiness is 20 hours per semester for clinical and theory sessions, with a total maximum of 60 hours for the entire VN Program. Failure to comply with this policy may lead to termination from the program. Students must notify the Vocational Nursing Department via email of any absences or tardiness due to illness or emergency circumstances before their scheduled class or clinical.

It is the responsibility of each student to monitor their attendance to avoid exceeding the maximum allowed hours, which can be done through the Diamond D Student Portal. Furthermore, students are accountable for completing any missed assignments and obtaining any missed lecture materials. While quizzes and final exams may not be made up, make-up tests may be arranged at the instructor's discretion and must be completed before the next scheduled exam in that class.

VOCATIONAL NURSING ABSENCE COMMITTEE

If a student exceeds the allowed number of absences in the program, they can request a review by the Vocational Nursing Absence Committee. This allows the student to appeal their status in the program before possibly being terminated due to excessive absences and tardiness.

The committee's purpose is clear and of the utmost importance. They are entrusted with a critical task: determining the fate of a student facing termination from the program due to absences and tardies caused by uncertain circumstances. Their first objective is to examine any extenuating circumstances that might have contributed to the student's absences. Understanding the context behind these absences is essential in making a fair and informed decision.

The next step is perhaps the most pivotal—deciding whether the student should be allowed to continue in the program or be dismissed. This decision would not only affect the student's academic journey but also their future career prospects and aspirations.

Finally, if necessary, the committee is responsible for formulating recommendations and stipulations. These guidelines would be crucial for students permitted to remain in the program, ensuring they have clear expectations and support. These recommendations would provide a pathway for the student to improve and a second chance at success for those seeking readmission, especially if it were their first admission into Valley Grande Institute. The committee's deliberations and decisions would ultimately shape the future of each student they evaluate, making their role both challenging and significant.

The committee is composed of the following:

- One student peer from each respective Vocational Nursing class.
- One Valley Grande Institute Staff member
- One representative from Valley Grande Institute's Career Services and/or Admissions Department
- One member from the community representing the healthcare sector

The committee must have a quorum of at least five (5) members present. A Vocational Nursing Instructor will be present to provide input as requested by the committee but will not have a vote in the decision-making process.

Before the committee meeting, the student has several important responsibilities to fulfill. First, they must review and sign their record of attendance, ensuring that all details are accurate and up-to-date. Alongside this record, the student must attach copies of any supporting documentation, if available, that could provide context and justification for their absences.

On the meeting date, the student must bring the supporting documents. This includes crucial items such as, but not limited to, a primary health care provider's excuse or notes, any relevant court documents, etc. By compiling and presenting this documentation, the student aims to provide a comprehensive and

transparent account of the circumstances surrounding their absences, which would be essential for the committee's review and decision-making process.

The committee will review the program's absentee policy, establishing a foundation in the rules and expectations that govern attendance.

The committee will review the student's specific absence record. This includes examining the number of classroom days missed, the clinical hours unaccounted for, and any previous appearances the student may have made before the Absence Committee. Additionally, the committee will assess whether the absences and the amount of missed time could have been avoided. Throughout this process, members are permitted to direct questions to the student, ensuring clarity and comprehensiveness in the evaluation. However, the conversation is to remain focused strictly on the absences, avoiding any deviations. Student and program confidentiality will be maintained at all times.

The Chairperson will facilitate the proceedings to ensure efficiency and fairness. They are responsible for allocating a total time limit of no more than 20 minutes for the student to present their case. The Chairperson will be the tiebreaker, if necessary.

The student will then be asked to step out of the meeting to allow for committee discussion and voting. The Chairperson may open the floor for further discussion on the potential recommendations which may assist the student.

The Chair will collect the votes and recommendations and review them with the committee. The student is then invited back into the room, where the Chairperson informs them of the committee's decision and recommendations.

The Director of Nursing will also provide the student with written notification within 72 hours of the committee meeting.

CLASSROOM/LECTURE TARDIES OR LEAVING EARLY

Students will be considered tardy if they arrive 5 minutes after the start of class, and each tardy will count as 1 hour of absence. Continuously leaving the classroom or skills lab will not be tolerated, as it disrupts other students' learning. If this happens, the time spent out of the classroom or lab will be treated as tardiness.

For example, if class starts at 8:00 AM and you arrive at 8:05 AM, one hour will be deducted from your allotted absences for being tardy, or if you frequently leave and reenter the room during the lecture, one hour will be deducted from your allotted absences.

Additionally, students who leave class early will have absence hours deducted starting from the time they leave.

CLINICAL TARDIES OR LEAVING EARLY

If a student arrives at the clinical site more than 15 minutes late, they will be sent home and will accrue absentee hours for the duration of the clinical day. Students who leave early from the site will have absence hours deducted starting from the time they leave. A student who arrives on time but must leave later in the day will not be allowed to return to the clinical site once they have left the premises.

NOTIFICATION OF CLASSROOM ABSENCE

Students who expect to be absent from a theory or didactic course should notify the Vocational Nursing Department by email or phone.

This is a professional responsibility that is important in the workplace and is also expected of Vocational Nursing students.

NOTIFICATION OF CLINICAL ABSENCE

If a student knows they will be absent on a clinical day, they must email the Vocational Nursing Director and clinical instructor. Phone calls from others, such as peers, spouses, or parents, will not be accepted.

The absence will be recorded on the clinical evaluation. No credit will be given for the day, and the missed hours cannot be made up. The hours missed will count towards the maximum of 20 hours allowed for the semester.

Failure to notify the department about an absence beforehand is considered unprofessional behavior. Not calling or showing up without notice may result in disciplinary action, including possible dismissal from the program.

MEDICAL CLEARANCE

Students must obtain clearance from a physician for any illness or health condition that may put themselves, faculty, classmates, or patients at risk.

LEAVE-OF-ABSENCE (LOA)

Should a student deem it necessary to request a Leave of Absence due to extenuating circumstances, they should schedule an appointment with the Vocational Nursing Director to discuss this option.

The Dean of Education may grant a leave of absence where there is sufficient cause and extenuating circumstances. A leave-of-absence is not to exceed 21 school days for the Vocational Nursing Program. Students on a leave of absence must return on the date assigned for return. If the student does not return on the assigned date and does not notify the school of the need for an extension on the leave of absence, the student may be dismissed from the Vocational Nursing Program.

Students granted a leave of absence will not incur any additional costs because of the leave of absence.

It is the student's responsibility to make up any missed assignments or exams within a specified time frame immediately upon returning to class/clinical.

In addition, it is the policy of the Vocational Nursing Department that no quizzes may be made up, and therefore, missing these will cause the student to receive a "0" as a grade for those assignments.

A student may be granted only one leave of absence per 12-month calendar period. School attendance records will clearly define the dates of the leave of absence and why it was granted. A statement such as this will be signed by the student and the Dean of Education and maintained in the student's file.

JURY DUTY

If a student receives a summons for jury duty, they should request a statutory exemption from serving. Serving on a jury may interfere with the student's ability to complete the program as planned. Upon request, the student can obtain a letter confirming their full-time student status, which can be provided by VGI's Registrar. Students who do not receive an exemption from jury duty will have their situation considered individually in relation to their accumulation of absence hours. If required to serve, the student must provide proper documentation from the court system to the VN Department immediately upon returning to school.

BEREAVEMENT LEAVE

In the event of the death of an immediate family member, students are allowed to take time off for bereavement. An immediate family member includes the student's spouse, child, parent, sibling, in-law within the previously mentioned categories, or maternal or paternal grandparents.

Students should notify the VN Department as soon as possible once they know the dates and times they need to be absent. A death certificate will be required as proof. It's important for students to be aware of their current accumulated absences to ensure compliance with the absence policy. We advise students to save their absences for emergencies or instances of bereavement.

COVID-19 / RESPIRATORY ILLNESS POLICY

Refer to CDC recommendations.

REPORTING UNPREPARED

Any student who arrives at class or clinical unprepared will be dismissed from the classroom or clinical site, and the absence will count towards the maximum allowed. Being "unprepared" includes, but is not limited to, not being in complete uniform (including all required nursing paraphernalia), or failing to have textbooks, nursing supplies, care plans, medication cards, reference materials, a watch, and other materials necessary to be successful in the classroom or clinical.

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES AND BEHAVIOR

Food is not allowed in the classroom, lab, or clinical setting. Drinks are allowed only in the classroom, but they must be in a closed, spill-proof container.

Sleeping, conducting non-class-related conversations, or engaging in other inappropriate non-academic behaviors will not be tolerated. These behaviors will result in the student(s) being asked to leave the classroom, and absence hours will be accrued for the remainder of the class.

Class breaks will be provided in the ratio of 10 minutes per 50 minutes of class lecture. Students will be expected to return to the classroom promptly after the 10-minute break. If the student exceeds a break time greater than 10 minutes, the instructor will deduct hours from their allotted absences for being tardy.

VGI REPRIMAND PROGRESSION

Valley Grande Institute's progressive discipline policy and procedures for students are designed to provide a structured corrective action process to improve and prevent a recurrence of undesirable behavior and performance issues.

Below are the steps of VGI's progressive discipline policy and procedures. VGI reserves the right to combine or skip steps depending on each situation's facts and the nature of the offense. Some factors that will be considered are whether the offense is repeated despite coaching, counseling, or training, the student's record, and the impact the conduct and performance issues have on the student, the class, or the program.

Step 1: Counseling and verbal warning

Step 1 allows the Instructor or VN Director to address the existing performance, conduct, or attendance issue. The Instructor or VN Director should discuss with the student the nature of the

problem or the violation of department policies and procedures. The Instructor or VN Director is expected to describe expectations clearly and steps the student must take to improve his or her performance or resolve the problem.

Within five business days, the Instructor or VN Director will prepare written documentation of the verbal counseling. The student will be asked to sign this document to demonstrate his or her understanding of the issues and the recommended corrective action.

Step 2: Written warning

The Step 2 written warning involves more formal documentation of the performance, conduct, or attendance issues and consequences.

During Step 2, the VN Director will meet with the student to review any additional incidents or information about the performance, conduct, or attendance issues and any relevant corrective action plans. The Director will outline the consequences for the student of his or her continued failure to meet performance or conduct expectations.

A formal performance improvement plan (PIP) requiring the student's immediate and sustained corrective action will be issued within five business days of a Step 2 meeting. The written warning may also include a statement indicating that the student may be subject to additional discipline, up to and including termination from the program, if immediate and sustained corrective action is not taken.

Step 3: Suspension and final written warning

Some performance, conduct, or safety incidents are so problematic and harmful that temporarily removing the student from the school may be the most effective action. When immediate action is necessary to ensure the safety of the student or others, the VN Director may suspend the student pending the results of an investigation.

Suspension recommended as part of the typical sequence of the progressive discipline policy and procedures are subject to approval from a next-level Director.

Step 4: Recommendation for termination from the program

The last and most profound step in the progressive discipline process is recommending that the student be terminated from the program. Generally, VGI will try to exercise the progressive nature of this policy by first providing warnings, issuing a final written warning, or suspending the student from school before proceeding to a recommendation to terminate. However, VGI reserves the right to combine and skip steps depending on each situation's circumstances and the nature of the offense. Furthermore, students may be terminated without prior notice or disciplinary action.

CLINICAL EXPERIENCES

Your clinical experiences will take place at various healthcare facilities throughout the South Texas region. It is your responsibility to ensure that you have reliable transportation to and from all clinical sites and that you can attend clinical during the required hours, allowing enough time for safe travel. Clinical experiences include nursing care for patients with acute, chronic, and aging illnesses, rehabilitative care, maternal-neonatal, pediatrics, and other areas of healthcare. You will participate in instructor-supervised patient care and have the opportunity to participate in clinical conferences at the beginning and end of the clinical day as directed by the clinical instructor.

You will not be allowed to go to the clinical site until your faculty has evaluated your skill sets and confirmed that you can perform the required tasks competently. Any skill that has not yet been completed successfully in the Skills Lab cannot be performed at clinical under any circumstances.

If you are absent due to illness or injury, you may need a physician or health care provider's release to return to class or clinical.

Arriving more than 15 minutes late to clinical will result in being sent home and counted as "absent" for the entire clinical day. If you frequently arrive between 1-15 minutes late, you may face disciplinary action, potentially including dismissal from the program.

Remember, insubordination, disruptiveness, unethical, or inappropriate behavior will not be tolerated during class, lab, or clinical periods.

CLINICAL UNIFORM POLICY

All rules of dress and appearance will apply when at the clinical site, including rules for hair, nails, name tag, proper uniform, and required supplies. Students who do not adhere to the uniform policy will be asked to leave the site for the day and will accrue absences for missing the clinical experience.

PATIENT ABANDONMENT

Please note that as Licensed Vocational Nurses, after passing the NCLEX-PN, it is important to remember that leaving patients unattended and at risk of harm is considered patient abandonment. This behavior may result in termination from your role and potential sanctions from the Board of Nursing. Patient abandonment is a serious and unprofessional offense that violates Vocational Nursing policies. This includes leaving the unit without reporting to the instructor for any reason or failing to notify your instructor if you are leaving the facility early.

The consequences include, but are not limited to the following:

- The first infraction will result in a counseling statement with probation.
- The second infraction will lead to dismissal from the VN Program with no option for appeal.

- Depending on the severity of the infraction, including harm to a patient as a result of the abandonment, students may face dismissal from the VN Program following the first incidence.

REFUSAL TO PROVIDE PATIENT CARE

As nurses, we provide high-quality care for all patients in all situations, regardless of one's background, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, state of mind, or other factors. It is our duty to serve all humans with utmost respect and professionalism.

Students in the Vocational Nursing Program are expected to provide exceptional care to assigned patients at the clinical site. If a student refuses to care for a particular patient, faculty will provide a review of the Nursing Code of Ethics and counsel the student on caring for all humans, regardless of individual circumstances or backgrounds.

A student who indicates a persistent refusal to care for a particular type of patient will receive further counseling regarding the appropriateness of nursing as a career choice. These instances will be documented in the student's school record.

PATIENT CARE AND PROCEDURES

Before performing any procedures in a clinical setting, a student must have the necessary theoretical knowledge and skills. Each clinical unit has a Policy and Procedures Manual which should be used as a reference for skills.

During clinical rotations, each student will be given a Skills Checklist to document the skills they perform. The supervising instructor should initial next to each skill that the student performs. This booklet will be kept in the student's file after completing the program, and all required skills must be successfully performed in the clinical, lab or classroom setting before completing the VN Program.

While at a clinical site, students must report directly to the clinical instructor. If any unusual incidents occur at the clinical site, the student should immediately inform their instructor.

CLINICAL EVALUATION

Students in the program will receive written evaluations of their clinical work regularly. These evaluations are used to measure the student's progress, identify strengths and weaknesses, recognize capabilities or deficiencies, and provide documentation. Students will have the opportunity to read these evaluations/progress reports in a conference with the instructor and will be asked to respond to the instructor's recommendations. All documentation will need to be signed by the student. If the student disagrees with the evaluation, they should request a meeting with the Vocational Nursing Director and/or clinical instructor to discuss their concerns.

The clinical performance and progress of each student is a critical component of the program. Students will be evaluated regularly by classroom, lab, and clinical instructors. Guidelines have been established to assist in the educational experience of each student. If any student is not in compliance with the guidelines listed below, they will be disciplined accordingly, up to and including dismissal from the VN Program:

- Demonstrates an inability to accurately report or document a patient's status or falsify and or misrepresent the truth.
- Demonstrates an inability to adequately utilize nursing procedures consistent with the appropriate level of training.
- Leaving a nursing assignment without properly notifying the clinical instructor.
- Making decisions without consulting the instructor that result in inappropriate actions, risk of harm, or actual harm to patients.
- Performing or attempting to perform nursing techniques and/or procedures without successfully completing the skill in the skills lab.
- Performing or attempting to perform nursing techniques and/or procedures for the first time in the clinical setting without the direct supervision of the instructor.
- Not demonstrating previously mastered techniques learned.
- Demonstrates an inability to recognize personal limitations, knowledge to perform nursing functions, or responsibility to the patient.
- Demonstrates an inability to accept moral, ethical, and legal responsibility for actions.
- Demonstrates an inability to follow established policies and procedures governing the student's role and performance in the care of patients

SKILLS LAB GRADING POLICY

The main goal of the Vocational Nursing Program is to train nurses to practice competently and safely. Competency in theory is assessed through written examinations, while skills competency is evaluated through skills lab tests, which are administered in the required courses.

The student is required to demonstrate both basic and advanced nursing skills during VNSG 1423 (Basic Skills) and VNSG 2431 (Advanced Skills). They should perform these skills and procedures safely and effectively within specified time constraints while adhering to nursing knowledge, ethical standards, and legal standards.

Successful completion of all relevant skills in the lab is crucial for students to understand their roles as nurses and succeed in clinical settings. As a result, all skills lab tests must be passed with a minimum grade of 78% by the 3rd and final attempt. If a student does not achieve at least 78% on the 2nd attempt, they will be placed on academic probation and offered remediation. The 3rd attempt will take place at the end of the level.

If a student does not pass the 3rd skills lab test with a grade of 78% or higher, they will fail the course, will not be allowed to progress to the next level, and will be dismissed from the program due to unsuccessful completion. This applies even if the student's overall final classroom average is passing.

For detailed grading procedures, please refer to the Basic Skills and Advanced Skills Syllabi.

CLINICAL GRADING POLICY

The evaluation process for the clinical component in each nursing course includes the use of clinical performance grading rubrics, course-specific evaluation tools, student-faculty conferences evaluation where applicable.

Student-faculty conferences are scheduled at the end of every clinical rotation and as needed to formally document student progress and performance. Conferences are documented on the Student Clinical Evaluation Form and in Diamond D as applicable.

Interim student-faculty conferences are scheduled at the faculty's discretion to evaluate student performance continuously throughout the semester. To satisfy course objectives and pass the clinical evaluation, students must meet 78% or higher of expected clinical competencies.

COMMUNICATION

Students must inform their instructor before leaving the clinical unit or site for any reason. Failure to do so will result in dismissal from clinical for the day, and absences will be recorded. Counseling forms and disciplinary action may also be initiated.

Students should refrain from using the hospital or clinical telephone for personal use while working in the clinical area. They are not allowed to make personal calls using the hospital or clinical phone.

Under no circumstances may a student take orders from a physician or take reports from another nurse or healthcare professional, whether verbally or over the telephone. This is a violation of the student's scope of practice and may result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal from the VN program.

Any information documented by a student intended for the patient's permanent medical record, as well as all "nurse's notes" documented on the VGI Clinical Paperwork, must include the student's first initial, last name, title, and school's initials. For example, *M. Smith, SVN/VGI*.

The student is responsible for communicating openly and honestly with their instructor regarding the patient's status, any changes in status, their care, or concerns about their progress.

Furthermore, the student must openly and honestly communicate with their clinical instructor their daily goals, any skills or procedures they have not yet successfully passed in the Skills Lab, and the skills/procedures they still need to be "checked off" in the clinical setting.

Students are not allowed to sign as a "witness" to anything related to patient care. For example, this includes signing as a witness on disposal of narcotics by a nurse, proper insulin dosage of a nurse, discharge or other paperwork given to patients, physician orders verified, etc.

As per facility policy, students will NOT translate medical information, give formal patient instructions (such as on procedures, outcomes, or discharge), or interpret consent forms/permits from physicians or other ancillary/professional staff.

CONFIDENTIALITY: HIPAA

All information about patients and their conditions is strictly confidential.

HIPAA is federal legislation that ensures confidentiality for all patients. As nurses, we must be diligent about not violating these regulations, or we and our employers could face legal difficulties and lose the public's confidence in us.

When referring to a patient in any school assignment, use only the patient's first and last initials.

Clinical conferences are private and for educational purposes only. The information discussed during these conferences must not be shared except in the presence of an instructor and only to further students' education and understanding of healthcare.

Remember these guidelines regarding patient confidentiality:

- Never discuss patient information in public areas where others may overhear.
- Only share patient information with those directly involved in the patient's care; if they don't need to know, you shouldn't share.
- As a student, you can discuss patient situations with classmates only in pre- or post-conference situations and private areas for educational purposes.
- Don't access or read the records of patients, their families, friends, or others unless necessary to provide care.
- Students can't take any information found in a patient's medical record out of the facility or make photocopies.
- When discussing a patient, don't use any identifiable factors to reference them, such as their name, birth date, social security number, or any describable features.

Remember, violating HIPAA can result in disciplinary action, including dismissal from the VN Program.

Always take patient confidentiality seriously - it's crucial for your future career and the trust of all healthcare patients.

As a Vocational Nursing Student, I agree to:

CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

*Patient information from any source and in any form (such as paper, verbal, or computer) is **STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL**. I shall protect the privacy and confidentiality of all patient information in accordance with HIPAA regulations. I will only access private patient information if I need to know it to provide safe, competent nursing care.*

As a student, I may see or hear confidential information about:

- *Patients and/or family members (patient records, conversations, financial information)*
- *Employees, volunteers, students/peers, contractors, or partners (salaries, employment records, disciplinary actions)*
- *Business information (financial records, report memos, contracts)*

I agree that:

- *I will only access information I need to perform my duties as a nursing student*
- *I will not, in any way, disclose or dispose of confidential information. If it is a part of my role as a student to do any of these tasks, I will follow the correct VN Department or clinical facility procedure for doing so (such as shredding confidential papers before throwing them away)*
- *I will not misuse or be careless with confidential information*
- *I will not share any confidential information, even if I am no longer a student of Valley Grande Institute, or if I do not complete the Vocational Nursing Program*
- *I know that confidential information I have learned as a student does not belong to me*
- *I will protect the privacy of patients and others*
- *I will not make any unauthorized copies of patient records*
- *I am responsible for my use or misuse of confidential information*
- *I am responsible for my failure to protect the confidential information*
- *I will consult my instructors if I have any doubt about the confidential nature of any information I receive*

FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH THIS AGREEMENT WILL RESULT IN DISCIPLINARY ACTION, UP TO AND INCLUDING DISMISSAL FROM THE VOCATIONAL NURSING PROGRAM.

HANDLING OF BLOOD/BODILY FLUIDS

Students must always observe Universal Blood and Body Secretions Precaution measures and use

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) by following this protocol:

Exercise caution when caring for any patient or practicing skills on any live individual, even in a lab setting. At a minimum, gloves should always be worn when touching a patient for any reason. Additional PPE may be necessary based on the diagnosis or suspected diagnosis of each patient. It is your responsibility to know and understand all PPE precautions before entering a patient's room or providing patient care. Gloves, goggles, masks, gowns, shoe covers, or hair covers may all be necessary to protect you and your patients.

As part of their clinical experience, students may care for patients with communicable diseases, known or unknown, including, but not limited to, AIDS, HIV, Hepatitis, and others. It is the philosophy of VGI that it is morally and ethically wrong to refuse to care for an individual for any reason, including the diagnoses he/she does or may have. It is our responsibility to take appropriate precautions while still providing the same high-quality care we would provide for any other patient or population.

LEARNING LABORATORY EXPECTATIONS

STUDENT INFORMATION

The skills laboratory is for teaching purposes. Students must understand and demonstrate the proficient performance of standard precautions before practicing procedures at the actual clinical sites, where there is potential exposure to actual blood and bodily fluids. The principles of standard precautions will be integrated across the curriculum.

SUPERVISION

The faculty oversees the skills lab as a teaching unit and is responsible for supervising skills practices and competency tests in the lab. The faculty comprises both the course and lab instructors, as well as any assistants. Supervision at clinical sites will be carried out by Valley Grande Institute faculty.

In case of accidental exposure to blood and/or bodily fluids, including needle stick injuries, it is the student's responsibility to immediately inform the Valley Grande Institute clinical instructor. Once informed, the instructor will notify the Vocational Nursing Director. The student must follow the facility's exposure guidelines.

PROFESSIONAL APPEARANCE

UNIFORMS

Students in the Vocational Nursing Program are required to wear teal nursing uniforms during class, lab sessions, and a white nursing uniform for clinicals. The uniforms must be approved by the VN Department and must have school patches sewn on the left sleeve. Students are allowed to wear white coats for warmth, if necessary. It is important to maintain the professional appearance of the patches. Faded or unkempt patches will not be allowed. Moreover, the patches must be completely sewn on; stapling, using Velcro, or taping of patches is not allowed. There may be times when students are allowed to “dress down” during class hours. If/when this happens, students will be expected to maintain a professional appearance. No shorts/skirts will be allowed and dresses must be full length. Pants/jeans must not have any holes in them. Tops must be at pant top level and not be revealing.

All students must wear white nursing uniforms and lab coats to all clinical classes and ceremonial occasions. The uniforms must be clean, unwrinkled, unstained, and in good condition. For dress or skirt uniforms, the length must be mid-knee, and slacks should touch the top of your shoes. The uniforms should fit loosely for ease of movement and comfort. Undergarments should be solid white or flesh-colored and must be traditional cut (i.e., no thong underwear). They should not have visible prints or designs and must be worn at all times. A white undershirt may be worn under the uniform if necessary.

White nursing shoes must have enclosed toes and heels. White socks or white stockings must be worn at all times; no athletic or colored socks are allowed. Clogs and Crocs are not acceptable. Shoes must be kept clean, unstained, and polished.

Female students must purchase an approved white nursing cap to be worn at graduation.

The school supplies school IDs, which must be worn to class and clinicals. They are considered part of the uniform. If you do not have your ID, you will be sent home and counted absent for the day. IDs must be worn face out and clearly visible. If your ID becomes worn, please see the main office to obtain a new one, which will be at the student’s cost.

JEWELRY

In order to maintain safe and hygienic conditions for patients, peers, faculty, staff, and other healthcare providers, there are guidelines regarding the jewelry that students are permitted to wear:

- Rings, if worn, should be plain bands only. Rings with stones are not allowed. Only one band may be worn.
- Only earrings are allowed for piercings. One earring per ear is permitted, and it must be a small stud in white, silver, or clear colors.
- Medical alert bracelets may be worn as needed.
- One wristwatch with a second hand and a plain white, black, brown, or metal band is allowed. Smartwatches are not permitted.

No other visible jewelry (e.g., necklaces, body piercings, bracelets) should be worn while in uniform. If any additional jewelry is worn in violation of this policy, the student will be dismissed from the classroom or clinical site, leading to accrual of absence hours and documentation of the policy violation in the student's file.

HAIR

Students are required to maintain a clean, neat, and professional hairstyle. Hair should be clean, well-groomed, and kept above the collar and away from the face at all times. Hair color should be conservative, professional, and of natural colors. Hair accessories such as rubber bands and bobby pins must match the student's hair color. Ribbons, colored barrettes, hair clips, bows, or headbands are not allowed. For both male and female students, hair should be neatly arranged so as not to extend over the shoulder or onto the face. Loose ponytails or braids are not permitted. All loose hair must be tied up in a neat bun, and bangs should be either above the eyebrows or pinned back. Male students are required to keep beards and mustaches neatly trimmed or clean-shaven; haircuts must be short and trimmed, or long hair must be neatly placed in a bun. Any student violating this policy will be sent home from class or clinical and will receive absences. Additionally, the violation will be documented in the student's file.

FINGERNAILS

Students are required to maintain clean and tidy hands with neatly trimmed and clean fingernails that do not extend past the fingertips. Nail polish and artificial nails are not allowed due to infection control concerns and to maintain a professional appearance. It is recommended for students to use hand lotion to prevent chapped, cracked hands, and hangnails. Violation of this policy will result in being sent home from class or clinical, and absence hours will be accrued. This occurrence will also be documented in the student's file as a policy violation.

FALSE EYELASHES

False eyelashes will not be allowed in the classroom and or clinical setting.

PERSONAL APPEARANCE/HYGIENE

Students must maintain a clean and hygienic appearance and ensure their breath is free of offensive odors. Those who smoke or live with smokers must be especially mindful of personal hygiene and avoid clothing or uniforms with a smoke smell, as it can be problematic for patients or peers with respiratory issues. The body, hair, and clothing should be completely free of tobacco odor, and hands should not have strong odors such as tobacco, onion, or garlic that could be offensive to patients.

Female students should keep their makeup conservative, and male students should be cleanly shaven.

When working with patients, students should not wear strong scents like perfume, body lotions, or aftershave.

Visible "love bites," "hickeys," or tattoos are not allowed during class or clinical and must be covered at all times. Failure to comply will result in the student being sent home until the issue is corrected, with accrued absence hours and documentation of the violation in their file.

GUM CHEWING

Gum chewing is **NOT** allowed in class, lab, or clinical.

Students will not be allowed to attend class, lab, or clinical if they fail to comply with the professional appearance policies. Students failing to comply will be counted absent for the day.

ACADEMIC PROGRESS

The procedures for probation or dismissal as outlined in the School Catalog vary for Vocational Nursing students; therefore, the following applies to all VN students:

GRADING SCALE

The following is the grading system used to record a student's academic progress through the Vocational Nursing courses and skills labs:

- A (Excellent) 92%--100%
- B (Above Average) 83%--91%
- C (Average) 78%--82%
- F (Failure) Below 78%

All students should keep track of their grades throughout the semester using their Diamond D Student Portal login. If a student wants to question a grade, they must contact their instructor within three business days of receiving the grade. If no questions are raised within this timeframe, the posted grade will stand.

Students will receive a progress report for each course every four weeks during the full length of the VN Program. Additionally, instructor assistance, tutoring, and advising are available to all students to support their success in the program. Tutoring is strongly recommended for students who feel they are struggling, whether it's with failed assignments, quizzes, or tests. Instructor tutoring schedules will vary based on each instructor's class schedule.

During clinical rotations, students must maintain a "PASSING" status in all evaluations to be successful through the clinical courses.

PROGRESS & DISMISSAL

In the Vocational Nursing Program, students are required to achieve a minimum course grade of 78% or higher in order to pass all courses. The final course grade will be rounded, meaning that a final grade falling between 77.5% and 77.9% will be rounded to 78% and considered passing. If a student's final grade is below 78% in any course, they will fail the course and, therefore, will be dismissed from the program. Before advancing to the next level, students must successfully pass all courses at their current level.

To progress in the program, students must meet the course grade requirements and attain a "Passing" status in their clinical rotations. Students who do not successfully pass all skills content on their third attempt will be dismissed from the program, regardless of their final Skills Lab grade being above 78%.

If a student is dismissed from the program, they must adhere to the Readmission Policies to re-enroll.

To continue progressing through the Vocational Nursing Program, you must maintain satisfactory academic progress. For further information, please refer to the "Satisfactory Academic Progress" section in the School Catalog.

UNANNOUNCED QUIZZES

Pop quizzes may be given throughout the program in any course. Please note, there is no make-up for missed quizzes.

MISSED EXAMS

Exams are to be taken at the time scheduled by the course instructor. Any technical issues that arise during online testing must immediately be brought to the attention of the instructor.

Any make-up exam must be taken before the next scheduled exam in that course. Exams are made up at the discretion of the instructor and may be in any format that's different from the original exam.

FINAL GRADE POLICY

Students whose final grade in any Vocational Nursing course is below 78% will not be allowed to continue to the next level and/or graduate from the Vocational Nursing Program.

GRADES

Each student is responsible for keeping up with his/her grades. This includes all daily grades, exam grades, and final exam grades. Students are able to monitor their grades through the use of the Diamond D portal.

The minimum passing final grade for all courses is 78%. Remember, only the final grade is rounded; daily grades or exam grades are not rounded.

FINAL EXAMINATION RULES

Before a final exam, all personal belongings must be placed in the center of the computer lab. Students will be assigned seats randomly. After entering the computer lab, there should be no talking. No electronic devices, such as cell phones, smart watches, or iPods, are allowed in the computer lab. Students cannot leave the computer lab until they have completed their exam. Once a student completes the final exam, they will not be allowed to re-enter the computer lab after leaving.

Any violation of these rules will result in the student being asked to leave the room, and they will receive a grade of zero for the final examination. All final exams are comprehensive.

TESTING GUIDELINES

The grade distribution for each course is outlined in the course syllabus for each of the VN courses. Instructors will give advance notice of chapter tests or final exams. Major exams will mainly consist of multiple-choice questions, but other formats may also be used. The number of questions, test format, and time allowed to complete the examination may differ from course to course or instructor to instructor. Item analysis will be conducted on all exams before final grades are issued to students.

Students who wish to contest test questions must do so within three (3) business days of completing the exam. The challenge should be submitted to the course instructor and must include the question, what the student believes to be the correct answer, and the source of the correct answer (textbook & page number, lecture notes/PowerPoint).

Students are responsible for scheduling any make-up exams on the first day they return to class or at the instructor's discretion. Make-up exams must be taken before the next scheduled exam, and the instructor may choose the format (essay, fill-in-the-blank, etc.).

TEST REVIEW

Students wanting to review their examinations must schedule an appointment with the instructor.

PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism is defined as "the act of taking the writings of another person and passing them off as one's own. The fraudulence is closely related to forgery and piracy—practices generally in violation of copyright laws."

Please note that plagiarism will not be tolerated. Any student caught plagiarizing on assignments, essays, or exams will receive an "F" for the final course grade, which will result in the student being dropped from the Vocational Nursing Program. Additionally, unethical behavior will be noted on the student's account.

If you use content from a source, ensure that it is in quotations and properly cited. **Do not plagiarize!**

TUTORING

Tutoring is encouraged for those students who score 80% or less in their courses. Although 80% is not failing, tutoring is encouraged since students are seen as "borderline" with their academic progress. Those doing well in their courses are also encouraged to attend tutoring if they find any topics or chapters particularly challenging. Instructors will provide their tutoring schedule at the beginning of each course.

NON-ACADEMIC DISMISSAL

Non-academic dismissal occurs when policies are violated.

Please take note of the following violations, which include, but are not limited to:

- Attendance: Failure to meet the attendance requirements as outlined in the Student Handbook.
- Violation of any of the Board of Nursing regulations.
- Criminal Activity: Engaging in or being convicted of felonious or criminal activity, whether on or off campus.
- Code of Conduct: Violation of one or more of the standards within the Code of Conduct as outlined under Student Conduct Policy.
- Patient Abandonment at the Clinical Site or during Clinical Lab.
- Any civil law violation resulting in an arrest will lead to immediate expulsion from the Vocational Nursing Program.

STUDENT CONDUCT POLICY

GENERAL CONDUCT

Students are expected to behave and dress appropriately according to the guidelines outlined in this catalog. Those who fail to do so may face disciplinary action, including potential removal from the Vocational Nursing Program.

In addition, any violation of the law will be reported to the authorities, and any violation of Board of Nursing standards or regulations will be reported to the Board of Nursing.

CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR

Students are expected to be respectful not only to their instructors, guest speakers, VGI staff, and administrators but also to fellow students in all classroom and clinical situations. Most importantly, respect for patients is of utmost importance in the clinical setting, as they are the individuals to whom you are dedicating your career.

Students should be attentive and engaged during theory, lab, and clinical courses. If an instructor deems certain behaviors inappropriate, a student may be asked to leave the classroom or clinical, and the student will then be considered absent for the remainder of the class or clinical time.

CONDUCT VIOLATIONS

Below are the violations on campus and at clinical facilities that will result in disciplinary action or dismissal from the Vocational Nursing Program. Violations include, but are not limited to:

- Unlawful possession, use, distribution, attempted unlawful possession, or being under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol.
- Destruction or damage of personal or school property.
- Evidence of potential or actual harm to patients, clients, or the public.
- Hazing of students or initiation that is dangerous, harmful, or degrading.
- Disruption of instruction, classroom activity, clinical activity, research, administrative activity, or other activity, whether on or off campus; this includes tardiness, talking in class, making noises, etc.
- Forceful or illegal entry into any area of the school or its property.
- Cheating or stealing, including taking school property without permission.
- Distributing or posting materials, publications, leaflets, or other printed materials without prior permission from School Administration.
- Verbal and/or physically abusive behavior towards others (including peers or staff), whether on or off campus.
- Possession of firearms, fireworks, explosives, or any other weapons, or possession of the materials for making weapons.
- False alarms or threats.
- Disobedience or insubordination towards faculty, staff, and clinical instructors, both on campus and at clinical sites.
- Illegal activities or other actions deemed inappropriate.
- Sexual harassment (Refer to the “Sexual Harassment” section in the VN Handbook and School Catalog).

- Using abusive language, lacking courtesy towards others, being argumentative, resistant to directions, demanding, or having a hostile attitude is considered unprofessional when dealing with issues. If needed, instructors or administrators will utilize conference forms to call attention to such behavior, and a student may be subject to further disciplinary action, including and up to dismissal from the VN Program.
- Violations of civil rights on campus that reflect unfavorably on the school may also be grounds for dismissal from the VN Program.
- Engaging in any inappropriate relationships with VGI staff members.

Students who are dismissed from the VN Program for disciplinary reasons are not allowed on school grounds.

ETHICS & PROFESSIONALISM

Valley Grande Institute's Vocational Nursing Program is dedicated to upholding excellence in the following areas:

- Educating nursing students and other healthcare professionals
- Providing safe and competent patient care
- Supporting the professional development of nursing faculty and staff

To ensure excellence, all Student Vocational Nurses at Valley Grande Institute are required to follow the Code of Professional Conduct in their interactions with patients, staff, instructors, students, and the public/community.

The Code of Professional Conduct includes two sections: Professional Obligations and Professional Ideals. "Obligations" refers to essential professional behaviors mandated by the ethical foundation of nursing practice. "Ideals" refers to desirable professional behaviors that professionals at all levels should strive to embody to enhance professional excellence.

Failure to fulfill professional obligations constitutes a violation of VGI's Code of Professional Conduct. Alleged or confirmed violations of these obligations, or the failure to uphold the professional ideals, could lead to dismissal from the VN Program.

PROFESSIONAL OBLIGATIONS

1. Treat patients, colleagues, other health care professionals, peers, instructors, administrators, and the public with the same degree of respect you would want them to show towards you.
 - Avoid offensive language, whether verbally or in writing, in the classroom, clinical, lab setting, in public areas, or online (social media, blogs)
 - Do not harass others physically, verbally, emotionally, or sexually

- Do not discriminate based on sex, religion, race, disability, age, or sexual orientation
 - Do not knowingly mislead others
 - Do not act in the role of the student nurse in any clinical situation that is not authorized by Valley Grande Institute and when not under the direct supervision of VGI faculty
 - Do not cheat, plagiarize, or otherwise act dishonestly
 - Do not abuse special privileges
 - Do not criticize the nursing or medical decisions of colleagues in the presence of patients
 - Recognize the impact of one's behavior on others, especially on patients and/or the public
 - Students are not allowed to use the internet or personal flash drives at clinical facilities
2. Treat patients with compassion, kindness, gentleness, and dignity
 - Respect the privacy and modesty of all patients
 - Respect patient confidentiality by adhering to HIPAA regulations
 - Avoid patient involvement when you are ill, distraught, or overcome with personal problems
 - Do not use cell phones for phone calls or texting while in class, lab, or clinicals.
 3. Be aware of your limitations and the deficiencies in knowledge or abilities; and know when and whom to ask for supervision, assistance, guidance, or consultation
 4. Immediately report serious breaches of the Code of Professional Conduct to your instructor or the Vocational Nursing Director
 5. Indicate disapproval or seek appropriate intervention if you observe less serious breaches, and consider still notifying your instructor or the Vocational Nursing Director
 6. Do not destroy, damage, or misuse property of Valley Grande Institute or any clinical affiliation
 7. Adhere to local, state, and federal laws and regulations

PROFESSIONAL IDEALS

1. Attempt to cultivate and practice clinical virtues, such as caring, empathy, and compassion
2. Notify the responsible instructor if something interferes with your ability to perform clinical tasks effectively
3. Learn from experience and grow from the knowledge gained from errors to avoid repeating them
4. Students should attend scheduled classes and complete assignments in a timely manner.
5. Cooperate with other students and members of the health care team in all class, lab, or clinical activities
6. Be generous with your time to answer questions from patients, patient's family members, or staff members; never answer questions if you are not completely sure of the answer; find guidance
7. Each nursing student represents Valley Grande Institute at all times while in uniform, whether on or off campus; therefore, they are expected to conduct themselves in a way that will reflect favorably on the student, the VN Program, the school, and/or the clinical site. Discretion and good judgment shall be exercised at all times.

DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR/INTERFERENCE IN OTHERS' LEARNING

Students exhibiting disruptive behavior(s) will be required to leave the classroom, lab, or clinical site. Absence time will be accrued for the remaining hours. A behavioral conference will take place and remain in the student's file. Depending on the disruption, students may also be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal from the VN Program.

VIOLATION OF THE ABOVE POLICY WILL RESULT IN DISCIPLINARY ACTION, UP TO AND INCLUDING DISMISSAL FROM THE VN PROGRAM.

ALCOHOL, DRUGS, AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE

The use of non-prescribed controlled substances by students is strictly prohibited when on or off duty as a nursing student. Use of controlled substances and/or alcohol in a clinical setting or on school property will result in automatic dismissal from the VN Program. Should a student be found under the influence or in possession of a controlled substance, the VN Director is obligated to report the incident to the Board of Nursing.

Purchase, transfer, receipt, or possession of alcohol or controlled substances in a clinical setting or on school property will result in automatic dismissal from the program. Furthermore, as part of continuing through the Vocational Nursing Program, random drug screening may be required at the discretion of Program or School Administrators or Program Faculty, with or without probable cause, and it will be at the student's cost. Refusal to participate in such testing will result in dismissal from the VN Program.

DRUG SCREENING

As part of a profession that serves the public, we must ensure our students and future nurses are free of any drug or substance that may impact their ability to care for patients.

Each student is considered to be a responsible adult and is expected to act accordingly.

1. Any student entering a field that requires a background criminal check and/or drug screening required by the school or clinical sites will follow standards established by such agency.
2. For the purposes of this policy, a student is considered to be "on the job" wherever he/she is acting on behalf of Valley Grande Institute and the Vocational Nursing Program (example: going to and from clinical, volunteering at health functions, clinical rotations, etc.).

TESTING FOR DRUG USE

For newly admitted students, this drug screen must be completed before starting the program. Vocational

Nursing students will not be allowed to begin their clinical rotations without completing this requirement, and therefore they will accumulate absences and miss valuable clinical skills opportunities.

Furthermore, as part of continuing through the Vocational Nursing Program, random drug screening may be required at the discretion of Program or School Administrators or Program Faculty, with or without probable cause, and it will be at the cost of the student.

METHOD OF TESTING

The drug screen will be conducted at a laboratory pre-approved by Valley Grande Institute.

The Vocational Nursing Department will only accept results from the pre-approved screening facility selected by the school; no past results from former schools, employers, or other facilities will be accepted. If a test result returns positive for any drug or substance, the student will be immediately dismissed from the program.

CLINICAL SITE DRUG SCREENING

The clinical sites also reserve the right to request any Valley Grande Institute student be drug screened if the site becomes concerned about a student's behavior. The clinical site reserves the right to ask any student to leave the clinical facility regardless of testing or test results.

ALLOCATION OF COSTS

All costs associated with any requested drug screens, including the required initial drug screen, will be at the cost of the student. This includes the cost of the test and any associated costs, such as driving to the facility.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Confidentiality will be maintained by sending the results to the school's Registrar. If a student believes an error has occurred in the drug screening results, it is the student's responsibility to contact the external vendor for verification, and any associated costs will be the student's responsibility.

POSITIVE DRUG SCREENING

If a student tests positive for drugs, they will be immediately dismissed from the Vocational Nursing Program.

Please note that it is the school's responsibility to report all positive results of currently enrolled students to the Board of Nursing (BON).

SMOKING

Valley Grande Institute is a smoke-free facility. Smoking is only permitted in outdoor areas and is prohibited within 20 feet of entrances to buildings or inside any building. Each clinical facility has its own smoking policy, which students must also comply with.

ELECTRONIC DEVICES

In order to reduce distractions to faculty and other students, electronic devices are discouraged to be used during instruction unless approved by the Instructor. Cell Phones may be utilized during breaks and between classes. During class, cell phones should be off and out of sight unless the instructor approves them for the lesson.

Cellular phones, smartwatches, and other electronic communication devices are strictly prohibited at the clinical site, clinical lab, and during exams or testing. This includes all devices capable of making or receiving calls, text messages, emails, and photos. Any student caught with a cell phone during an exam will face the following consequences:

- They will be excused from the testing area, and their exam will be closed then.
- They will receive the grade earned when they were excused from the testing area, with a deduction of 10 points.
- They will be docked for 1 hour of absence and will not be allowed to make up that test.

Any student found using an unapproved electronic device at the clinical site or clinical lab will be asked to leave, and their clinical hours will be docked. The use of cell phones for emergency situations must be pre-approved by the instructor on a per-case basis. Additionally, no photographs of clinical patients or personnel are to be taken.

SOCIAL NETWORKING POLICY

Please adhere to the following social networking policy. Failure to comply will result in disciplinary action, possibly including dismissal from the program:

1. Do not disclose the identity of patients by sharing their names or any information that may lead to their identification, such as initials, age, gender, social status, name of the healthcare agency, diagnosis, specific tests or procedures performed, and physical and/or psychological condition. Identifying patients and their family members is a serious violation of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA).

2. Do not take photos or videos of patients or their family members using personal electronic devices,

including cell phones. Transmitting patient-related images through electronic media is strictly prohibited.

3. Avoid online contact with patients or their family members. Online contact with patients or their family members is considered a boundary violation. Even if a patient or family member initiates contact, personal relationships with them are not permitted.

4. Do not post sexually explicit photos.

5. Do not post photos of manikin parts used for learning skills.

6. Do not post photos of skills performed in the clinical laboratory by faculty or students.

7. Do not make libelous, slanderous, bullying, threatening, harassing, profane, obscene, sexually explicit, racially or culturally derogatory, homophobic, or other offensive comments.

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

Each new class will have the opportunity to elect class representatives. These representatives will act as liaisons between the faculty and the student body. They will represent their cohort at the Student Affairs Committee meetings and other meetings as necessary.

The following are the responsibilities, functions, and limitations of the elected class representative:

- The class representative should be nominated through secret ballots, managed by a VGI staff or faculty member.
- The class representative election process should take place no sooner than six weeks after the commencement of the first level to ensure that the students have become well-acquainted with each other.
- The role of the class representative is to act as the communicator between their class and the Student Affairs Committee.
- The class representative should be a good communicator rather than just the “most popular” student.
- The class representative must maintain good academic standing throughout the duration of the program.
- Information discussed in the Student Affairs Committee will be shared with the class in the form of written meeting minutes, and the class representative should not communicate this information verbally.
- The class representative must represent the school and their cohort in a responsible, ethical, and professional manner both on and off campus.
- The class representative should establish a process for obtaining concerns from their peers in a timely manner before presenting them at the Student Affairs Committee meetings.

- Only the Vocational Nursing Director will have the authority, if necessary, to dismiss the class representative from their duties.
- If the class representative is removed or withdraws from the program, a new class representative will be elected within three weeks to replace the previous representative.

TRANSPORTATION

Students are responsible for their own transportation to and from the school, clinical sites, or other school activities. This includes all associated costs such as gas, parking fees, and any other travel expenses. It is important for each student to have reliable transportation and to allow enough time for travel to ensure punctuality for classes, labs, and clinical sessions. This also includes planning for extra time to find new locations, such as a new clinical site.

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

To be eligible for graduation, students must adhere to the "Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP)" and all Vocational Nursing requirements. This entails meeting academic standards and fulfilling all school obligations, such as financial/tuition fees and returning loaned items. Additionally, students must achieve a minimum passing grade of 78% or higher for all courses, including completing clinical requirements.

Students must wear a clean, white, unwrinkled VGI uniform for the graduation ceremony. Female students are also expected to wear a white nursing cap with a blue ribbon. Moreover, all attending students must comply with the Professional Appearance policies, including minimal jewelry, groomed facial hair, no visible tattoos, and neatly pinned back hair or a trimmed appearance.

LICENSURE EXAMINATION (NCLEX-PN)

To work as a Licensed Vocational Nurse (LVN) in the State of Texas, graduates are required to pass the National Council Licensure Examination for Vocational/Practical Nurses (NCLEX-PN). We will continue to support students as they prepare for the NCLEX-PN post-graduation. It is advisable to take the licensure test as soon as you are eligible. Once you are eligible, the Board of Nursing will send you an Authorization to Test (ATT) email, allowing you to register for your examination date and time. Please ensure that you provide an accurate and frequently checked email address when registering with the Texas Board of Nursing and Pearson Vue.

ADVISING AND STUDENT SERVICES

Students seeking advising in non-academic areas should discuss their concerns with the Vocational Nursing Director. The Director can assist in setting up an appointment with Valley Grande Institute's Student Services Liaison. For academic guidance, students should meet with their course instructors. If

a student has concerns about the program as a whole, they can request an appointment with the VN Director.

VOCATIONAL NURSING PROGRAM OFFICE HOURS

The regular office hours for the VN Department are Monday to Friday, from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm. Faculty and administrators are available during these hours to address student concerns. To ensure that there are no conflicting activities, it is best for students to email and set up an appointment to meet with the program faculty or Directors due to their class and tutoring schedules. The offices are closed on Saturdays, Sundays, and major holidays.

OFFICE HOURS

Faculty members are available for conferences during their scheduled office hours. To ensure that there are no conflicting activities, it is best for students to email and set up an appointment to meet with the program faculty or Directors due to their class and tutoring schedules.

SCHOOL DAYS

Classroom days are scheduled Monday through Friday, generally from 8:00 am – 5:00 pm. However, these hours vary due to clinical experiences and may start earlier or run later. On occasion, clinical requirements may occur on the weekend. Advance notice of any after-hours requirements will be given to all students, including a clinical schedule.

ADHERENCE TO POLICIES

Valley Grande Institute's Vocational Nursing Students shall:

- Adhere to Valley Grande Institute's policies as outlined in the School Catalog and the Vocational Nursing Handbook
- Obtain required equipment and supplies and ensure it is kept in good working order
- Accept clinical assignments in coordination with the clinical instructor
- Follow policies and procedures at the assigned clinical sites
- Successfully pass all course, lab, and clinical instruction as outlined in each course syllabus

POST GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

Our goal is for each student to graduate, pass the NCLEX-PN, and become employed as a Licensed Vocational Nurse. Our accrediting agencies, such as ABHES and TWC, require us to monitor these statistics on each student. After you graduate, you will receive communication from Valley Grande

Institute in the form of surveys, emails, phone calls, or text messages. We will request information from you including your current employer, job role, wages, and more. Having this data helps us meet accreditation reporting requirements and ensures we are achieving high standards of success. If you submit certain responses, such as “I am not currently employed because I am sick,” more information may be requested from you. These are documents we have to provide to our regulatory agencies. Please ensure you respond to all information requests in a responsible, honest, and timely manner. Aside from reporting requirements, student information will not be shared with other entities regarding your specific situation (such as place of employment) without student consent.

TEXAS BOARD OF NURSING RULES & REGULATIONS

To review the BON’s stance on any topic, including expectations, behavior, and regulations, please visit their site at: <http://www.bon.texas.gov>.



VOCATIONAL NURSING HANDBOOK CERTIFICATION FORM

This is to certify that I have received a copy of the Vocational Nursing Student Handbook from Valley Grande Institute for Academic Studies. I have also received the BON Eligibility & Disciplinary Information. In addition, I certify that the VN Student Handbook has been reviewed with me during the admission orientation.

I understand and accept the policies as outlined in the handbook and agree to abide by all policies. I understand that if I fail to abide by the policies as outlined in this VN Handbook and/or the VGI Student Catalog, I may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal from the VN Program.

Print Name: _____ **Signature:** _____ **Date:** _____

CONFIDENTIALITY AND CONSENT AGREEMENT

*Patient information from any source and in any form (such as paper, verbal, or computer) is **STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL**. I shall protect the privacy and confidentiality of all patient information in accordance with HIPAA regulations. I will only access private patient information if I need to know it to provide safe, competent nursing care.*

As a student, I may see or hear confidential information about:

- *Patients and/or family members (patient records, conversations, financial information)*
- *Employees, volunteers, students/peers, contractors, or partners (salaries, employment records, disciplinary actions)*
- *Business information (financial records, report memos, contracts)*

I agree that:

- *I will only access information I need to perform my duties as a nursing student*
- *I will not, in any way, disclose or dispose of confidential information. If it is a part of my role as a student to do any of these tasks, I will follow the correct VN Department or clinical facility procedure for doing so (such as shredding confidential papers before throwing them away)*
- *I will not misuse or be careless with confidential information*
- *I will not share any confidential information, even if I am no longer a student of Valley Grande Institute, or if I do not complete the Vocational Nursing Program*
- *I know that confidential information I have learned as a student does not belong to me*
- *I will protect the privacy of patients and others*
- *I will not make any unauthorized copies of patient records*
- *I am responsible for my use or misuse of confidential information*
- *I am responsible for my failure to protect the confidential information*
- *I will consult my instructors if I have any doubt about the confidential nature of any information I receive*

I verify that I understand the hazards and possible inherent risk of exposure to blood and/or bodily fluids, thereby risking exposure to microbial infections, including, but not limited to, Hepatitis B and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). I hereby consent to such laboratory practicum and agree to hold Valley Grande Institute, its agents, employees, and students free and harmless from any claims, demands, or suits for damages from any injury or complications that may result.

FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH THIS AGREEMENT WILL RESULT IN DISCIPLINARY ACTION,

UP TO AND INCLUDING DISMISSAL FROM THE VOCATIONAL NURSING PROGRAM.

Print Name: _____ **Signature:** _____ **Date:** _____