



Nursing Program Handbook

2023-2024



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Welcome Nursing Students

Congratulations on your acceptance into the River Valley Community College (RVCC) Nursing Program! Whether as a member of our Associate of Science Degree in Nursing or our Practical Nurse Diploma program, you have taken the first step towards a rewarding future as a professional nurse. We are excited that you chose to begin your journey with us.

The RVCC Nursing Program is nationally accredited by the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN) through 2029. This accreditation ensures that our nursing program meets evidence-based standards of educational quality through continual assessment and evaluation.

The RVCC nursing faculty possess diversity in classroom and clinical expertise. You will meet all of them throughout the course of your education in the classroom, lab, and during your clinical experience. They all are NH Board of Nursing approved educators and bring a variety of nursing experiences and years of clinical practice to share with you in your respective educational journeys.

This **Nursing Student Handbook** is an important tool to ensure understanding of the program policies and expectations of nursing students; please review carefully. During the first week of class, we will review these policies and answer any questions you may have. Along with this handbook, please review the **RVCC Student Handbook** for general policies and procedures. Program policies are subject to revision. Nursing students are notified by written notice of revisions.

We hope you will engage in student activities not only in the nursing program, but also throughout the college. Some of the opportunities include becoming a member of the Nursing Club and the Student Senate. Through these organizations, you will have opportunities to participate in community service events, health activities, and fund-raising. We are excited you have joined our nursing programs and look forward to supporting you throughout your educational journey.

Best Regards,

Denise Ruby

Denise Ruby MSN, RN
Department Chair, Nursing
Professor of Nursing

Eileen Glover

Eileen Glover, DNP, MSN, RN-BC, NEA-BC
Department Chair, Allied Health
LPN Program Director, Keene/Lebanon
Professor of Nursing

Full-Time Faculty Roster

Denise Ruby Professor ASN Department Chair	ASN – New Hampshire Technical Institute BSN – University of New Hampshire MSN– Norwich University
Eileen Glover Professor Department Chair, Allied Health LPN Program Director Keene/Lebanon/Manchester	ASN – New Hampshire Community Technical College MSN – Walden University DNP – American Sentinel University
Sonya Kuykendall Professor Claremont Clinical Coordinator	BSN – California State University MSN – Indiana Wesleyan University
Aime Reed Professor Keene Clinical Coordinator	BSN – Franklin Pierce University MSN – Franklin Pierce University
Connie Powell Professor ASN Program Director	ASN – Illinois Central College BSN – Franklin Pierce University MSN – Franklin Pierce University
Cynthia Smith Associate Professor Claremont Clinical Coordinator	ASN – New Hampshire Technical College BSN – Walden University MSN – Walden University
Traci Fairbanks Associate Professor	ASN – River Valley Community College MSN – Saint Joseph’s College
Dolores Gifford Associate Professor LPN Program Director Laconia	ASN – North Shore Community College MSN – Walden University
Heather Newfield Associate Professor LPN Program Director Littleton	ASN- New Hampshire Community Technical College BSN- Chamberlain University College of Nursing MSN- Chamberlain University College of Nursing
Constance White Associate Professor Keene	ASN- Vermont Technical College BSN - Western Governors University
Sandra LaPointe Associate Professor Manchester	ASN – Manchester Community College BSN – Rivier University
Kim Ambrose Associate Professor Lebanon	ASN- New Hampshire Technical Institute BSN – University of Vermont MSN – Walden University

Section I: Mission and Philosophy

River Valley Community College Mission Statement

River Valley Community College transforms lives by providing a quality and affordable education through innovative personal approaches to lifelong learning and career pathways.

Nursing Program Mission Statement

The Nursing Program advances the mission of the River Valley Community College through excellence and accessibility to pre-licensure nursing programs of study. The Nursing Program supports students in achieving their personal and professional goals as responsible and contributing members of the nursing profession and of their communities. Our program is committed to providing innovative, evidenced-based curriculum that prepares students for evolving health care systems, commitment to outstanding patient care, and encourages lifelong learning. This program prepares students to take the national council licensing examination and enter practice as either practical or registered nurses.

Nursing Program Philosophy

The nursing metaparadigm of person, health and wellness continuum, nursing, environment, and teaching/learning are foundational concepts which merge with the values and beliefs of the nursing faculty to create and maintain the nursing curricula. Supported with a foundation of science and liberal arts, the curriculum focuses on health and wellness and nursing concepts. The curriculum focuses on acquisition of pre-licensure knowledge, skills, and attitudes of QSEN competencies using the Dreyfus model of skill acquisition and the work of Dr. Patricia Benner. Nursing students begin the program of study at the novice level, and by integrating classroom theory, laboratory and clinical learning experiences, end the program at the proficient level, preparing them for clinical practice as a competent new graduate nurse.

Person: The faculty believes that every person is a holistic being with unique biophysical, psychosocial, intellectual, cultural, and spiritual dimensions. People share common and universal needs for physiologic well-being, safety, love and belonging, recognition and self-esteem, and self-actualization. An individual's needs are influenced by society, culture, genetics, and the environment. People function within their individual context and have the ability and right to make their own health care decisions that maximize their health potential. A person has a perception of health and that perception of health influences their behavior and choices.

Health Wellness Continuum: Health is a dynamic state along a continuum, and includes physical, mental, and social well-being. The World Health Organization (WHO) defines health as a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. Maintaining health is a dynamic process and is affected by the developmental stage, the environment and the person's individual beliefs and values. As nurses, we promote the ability of the individual to achieve

optimal wellness. Nursing is a unique combination of the arts and sciences. Nurses are compassionate and competent providers of care who protect, promote, and optimize the health and abilities of people. Nurses take action to prevent illness and injury, alleviate suffering through the diagnosis and treatment of human response, and advocate for the health care of individuals, families, and groups. The nursing process is a highly interactive, problem-oriented model which nurses use to provide holistic individualized care. The goal of the nursing process is to help people with health care needs to achieve homeostasis or to help them die with dignity. The nurse formulates clinical judgments based on evidence from the natural and behavioral sciences and humanities to accomplish this goal. Nurses use nursing presence to develop a therapeutic nurse-patient relationship in order to interact with individuals, families and groups.

Environment: The environment is comprised of the internal and external forces that create the context in which the person interacts and functions. Internal and external environmental factors affect health outcomes. Along with genetics, personality traits, culture and life choices, the environment is a co-determiner of health and illness. Nurses consider biological, psychological, developmental, sociological, and spiritual dimensions in creating the nurse-patient relationship within a healthy environment that prevents illness and promotes health and wellness.

Teaching/Learning: The faculty believes that teaching and learning are cooperative processes with shared responsibility for achievement. Teaching the art and science of nursing requires establishing a partnership between students and faculty. The role of nursing faculty in this process is one of facilitator who provides resources, incentives, and a nonthreatening milieu in which the learner is comfortable to engage with others. The role of the learner in this process is that of preparing prior to class, participating in learning activities, and questioning when unsure.

We believe that nursing skills are developed through clinical practice. On-going faculty evaluation of students and students' evaluation of teaching faculty are integrated in each course. These evaluations are essential assessments for program quality improvement and curriculum development. Core nursing competencies advance from simple to complex and are integrated and assessed at regular intervals in the program.

Learning is a continual, life-long process. The faculty believes that the availability of multiple entrance and exit options in nursing education is necessary for adult learners to meet their career goals. The associate degree in nursing provides a foundation for advancement to higher education and an expansion of nursing skill and career options.

The RVCC Nursing programs adhere to the American Nursing Association (ANA) Code of Ethics.

To access the ANA Code of Ethics with Interpretive Statements:

<http://nursingworld.org/MainMenuCategories/EthicsStandards/CodeofEthicsforNurses/Code-of-Ethics-For-Nurses.html>

The 2023 – 2024 Common Academic Calendar is available at:

<https://www.rivervalley.edu/programs-training/academic-calendar/>

Section II: Nursing Program Framework and Outcomes

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework guiding the nursing program of study is grounded in the work of Dr. Patricia Benner, which utilizes the Dreyfus Model of Skill Acquisition to promote competencies that progress from basic concepts to more complex across the curriculum. At the beginning of the program, individual learners are novice nursing students who, after successfully completing all program requirements, become competent new graduate nurses.

Each course incorporates learning experiences that facilitate student accomplishment of the program objectives related to six areas: patient-centered care, evidence-based practice, safety, quality improvement, informatics, and teamwork/ collaboration. Major concepts threaded throughout the educational experience at River Valley Community College's Nursing Program include the nursing process, the nurse as provider and manager of care, legal and ethical practice, environment, teaching and learning process, the health wellness continuum, person, and professionalism. As a graduate nurse, the individual demonstrates skills, attitudes, and knowledge that are essential for safe and effective nursing practice.

End of Program Outcomes

1. Eighty percent (80%) of students will graduate from the River Valley Community College Practical Nursing Program within one year and seventy-five percent (75%) of students from the River Valley Community College Associate Degree Nursing Program will graduate within two years of the initial admission into the program.
2. The first-time pass rate for River Valley Community College nursing graduates is equivalent to or exceeds 80% pass rate for first-time test takers who are graduates of practical or associate degree nursing programs.
3. Within six months of graduation from the River Valley Community College Nursing Programs, ninety percent (90%) of the graduates will be employed as either Practical or Registered Professional Nurses.

End of Program Student Learning Outcomes

Graduates of the River Valley Nursing Associate of Science Degree curriculum will demonstrate competency in:

Patient-Centered Care

Recognize the patient or designee as the source of control and a full partner in providing compassionate and coordinated care based on respect for the patient's preferences, values, and needs.

As evidenced by:

- Demonstrating culturally competent, patient-centered care for patients and families across the lifespan in a variety of clinical settings using nursing process as a systematic approach for organizing, planning, implementing, and evaluating care.
- Providing equal and respectful care for patients and families from all socioeconomic backgrounds and cultures.

- Using interpersonal skills and professional values to create a therapeutic, caring relationship with the patient and family.
- Demonstrating collaboration and coordination with patients and families when making clinical decisions regarding nursing care.

Teamwork and Collaboration

Function effectively within nursing and interprofessional teams, fostering open communication, mutual respect, and shared decision making to achieve quality patient care.

Collaborate with the patient and family using effective communication to develop patient-centered, goal-oriented, culturally appropriate plans of care.

As evidenced by:

- Demonstrating collaboration with the healthcare team in planning care for patients and their families using ethical, legal, and regulatory frameworks of professional nursing.
- Setting priorities and organizing the delivery of nursing care to individuals and groups that is safe, effective, efficient, and collaborative.
- Demonstrating civility and professional behaviors when communicating and collaborating with patients, families, nurses, and other healthcare professionals.
- Using clear, concise, accurate verbal and written communication when interacting with patients, families, nurses, and other healthcare professionals.

Evidence-Based Practice

Integrate best current evidence with clinical expertise and patient/family preferences and values for delivery of optimal health care.

As evidenced by:

- Employing teaching and learning principles to foster patient education, health promotion, illness prevention, or self-management of chronic disease using current evidence-based resources.
- Utilizing current, evidence-based practice guidelines when providing care to patients and their families.
- Incorporating evidence-based research findings into nursing practice.

Quality Improvement

Use data to monitor the outcomes of care processes and use improvement methods to design and test changes to continuously improve the quality and safety of health care.

Use self-reflection for continuous improvement in professional actions, behaviors, and clinical practice.

As evidenced by:

- Researching current evidence on best practices in patient safety, clinical practice, and effective system processes.
- Identifying systems and processes in nursing and healthcare that are unsafe, inefficient, or pose a risk for nurses and/or patient populations.
- Advocating for patient safety by utilizing quality improvements initiatives within healthcare settings.
- Practicing self-reflection for personal growth and improvement within the nursing profession.

Safety

Minimize risk of harm to patients and providers through both system effectiveness and individual performance.

Integrate knowledge, judgement, and skills to practice nursing safely and competently within structured health care settings.

As evidenced by:

- Setting priorities and organizing the delivery of nursing care to individuals and groups in a way that is safe, effective, efficient, and collaborative.
- Basing clinical decisions and nursing judgement using current best practice guidelines and evidence-based research.
- Demonstrating accountability for nursing care given directly or through delegation.
- Practicing self-reflection of clinical knowledge, skills, and attitudes to enhance individual performance as a nursing professional and clinician.

Informatics

Use information and technology to communicate, manage knowledge, mitigate error, and support decision-making.

As evidenced by:

- Providing clear, concise, complete, and accurate documentation of nursing care for individuals or groups using unambiguous language.
- Maintaining privacy and confidentiality of all health information using professional codes of ethics, agency policies, and state or federal privacy legislation.
- Utilize health records to identify potential health problems, insure safe medication administration, assist in clinical decision-making, and ensure quality nursing care based on objective data, physician orders, and facility policies.

Graduates of the River Valley Practical Nurse curriculum will demonstrate competency in:

Patient-Centered Care

Implement a plan of care that recognizes the patient or designee as the source of control and a full partner in providing compassionate and coordinated care based on respect for the patient's preferences, values, and needs.

As evidenced by:

- Demonstrating culturally competent, patient-centered care for patients and families across the lifespan in a variety of clinical settings using nursing process as a systematic approach for organizing, planning, implementing, and evaluating care.
- Providing equal and respectful care for patients and families from all socioeconomic backgrounds and cultures.
- Using interpersonal skills and professional values to create a therapeutic, caring relationship with the patient and family.
- Demonstrating collaboration and coordination with patients and families when making clinical decisions regarding nursing care.

Evidence-Based Practice

Integrate best current evidence with clinical expertise for delivery of optimal health care.

As evidenced by:

- Participates in data collection and/or other research activities.
- Collaborates with other professionals to provide individualized care based on best current evidence, patient values, and clinical expertise.
- Locates evidence reports related to clinical practice topics and guidelines.
- Participates in the integration of new evidence into standards of practice, policies, and nursing practice guidelines.

Safety

Minimize risk of harm to patients and providers through both system effectiveness and individual performance.

As evidenced by:

- Participates in error analysis and systems improvement.
- Contributes to the development of effective patient safety plans.
- Uses appropriate strategies to reduce reliance on memory and interruptions to reduce the risk of harm to self and others.
- Demonstrates effective use of technology and standardized practices that support safe practice.
- Demonstrates effective use of strategies at the individual and systems levels to reduce risk of harm to self and others.
- Participates in collecting and aggregating safety data.
- Uses organizational error reporting system for “near miss” and adverse event reporting.
- Communicates observations or concerns related to hazards and errors involving patients and/or members of the health care team.
- Prepares timely data collection to facilitate safe, effective transfer of patient care responsibilities during care transitions.
- Demonstrates the use of debriefing strategies to reduce psychological and physical harm to patients.
- Utilizes established safety resources to ensure safe and effective practice.

Teamwork and Collaboration

Function effectively within nursing and interprofessional teams, fostering open communication, mutual respect, and shared decision making to achieve quality patient care.

As evidenced by:

- Demonstrates self-awareness of strengths and limitations as a team member.
- Initiates plan for self-development as a team member.
- Acts with integrity, consistency, and respect for differing views.
- Functions competently within the Licensed Practical Nurse scope of practice as a member of the health care team.
- Assumes the role of team member or leader based on the situation.
- Initiates requests for assistance when the situation warrants it.
- Acknowledges areas of overlap in role or responsibility as a member of a team.
- Uses the contributions of others when assisting patients to achieve health goals.

Informatics

Use information and technology to communicate, manage knowledge, mitigate error, and support decision-making.

As evidenced by:

- Accesses needed information accurately and efficiently.
- Utilizes sources of data that reflect current standards of practice.
- Utilizes appropriate technologies in the process of assessing and monitoring patients.
- Uses information effectively to improve nursing practice.
- Uses information technology to enhance own nursing knowledge.

Quality Improvement

Use data to monitor the outcomes of care processes and use improvement methods to design and test changes to continuously improve the quality and safety of health care.

As evidenced by:

- Actively seeks information about quality initiatives in individual care settings and organizations.
- Participates in quality improvement processes to make processes of care interdependent and explicit.
- Participates in the use of quality indicators and core measures to evaluate the effect of changes.
- Participates in the use of quality improvement tools to assess performance and identify gaps between local and best practices.

Section III: Nursing Program Policies

The following policies directly relate to processes and expectations of students in the nursing program(s). It is the student's responsibility to read this handbook and be familiar with these policies. Failure to do so does not negate any student responsibility related to violation of any of the policies. Failure to comply with any of the policies in this Handbook may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal from the course or River Valley Nursing Program.

Academic Responsibilities and Professional Behaviors

The following are guidelines of the general academic responsibilities and professional behaviors that are expected of all RVCC nursing students. Students will receive verbal or written warnings of violation of expected behaviors by faculty or the Program Director. It is then the student's responsibility to modify the behavior for which the warning was given. **Failure to comply to any noted code of conduct violations may result in an Administrative Failure (AF) in the course and possible dismissal from the nursing program.**

Academic Responsibilities

- Adhere to the college policies/procedures, nursing program policies/procedures, and healthcare facility policies/procedures as noted in current handbooks, CCP modules, orientation modules, and as instructed by nursing faculty.
- Acknowledge that learning is accomplished through faculty facilitation, self-directed learning, and interaction with others.
- Core Liberal Arts Courses

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- Must be completed either prior to or during each respective semester as listed in the Nursing Program Map.
- If a core Liberal Arts co-requisite course needs to be repeated, it must be retaken within one semester immediately after the course non-progression.
- Must be completed with a grade of “C” or greater.
- Core Liberal Arts courses taken at other colleges may be transferred if a “C” or greater grade is achieved and were completed within 10 years. Information can be found in the RVCC College Catalog at <https://catalog.rivervalley.edu/transfer-of-credit>
- Nursing courses
 - Must be completed in sequential order with a passing letter grade of “B⁻ (minus)”.
 - All components of the course (lecture, lab, clinical) must be sequentially passed for progression in the program.
 - The entire sequence of nursing courses must be completed within three (3) years from the start of the first course in the RN program (ADNR116R) or two (2) years from the start of the first course in the PN program (NURS110).
- It is recommended that students should work no more than 20 hours per week
- Arrive on time to class, lab, and clinical and be engaged in the learning.
- Attend all nursing classes, lab sessions, and work-based clinical learning experiences.
- Complete homework and other assignments on time and submit according to instructions.
- Complete all work using academic integrity and following the direction of the instructor.
- Check their school email every day when school is in session and every week during vacation time.
- Take personal responsibility for submitting and maintaining current required documents.
- Take personal responsibility for engaging in learning and success in the nursing program.

Attendance

Regular attendance in the classroom, laboratory, and clinical is necessary for students to meet the stated objectives of the program and hours required by the New Hampshire Board of Nursing. Absences may make it impossible for a student to meet course objectives and time requirement. If an absence results in a greater than one-week duration, students should collaborate with their academic advisor to develop a plan of action to ensure compliance with program requirements.

Absences

General

Attendance for all learning environments is expected in order to comply with the New Hampshire Board of Nursing (NHBON) rule Nur 602.12 which dictates the minimum number of hours required for nursing classroom instruction and concurrent clinical practice. Failure to complete these hours may make it impossible for a student to meet course objectives.

Greater than one absence of class, lab, or clinical time (or combination thereof) may affect course standing and the student will be required to meet with the Program Director to discuss a course of action.

Classroom Learning

- An assignment will be provided for the student to be completed within 48 hours of the absence. The assignment will directly relate to the nursing concepts as outlined in the weekly content.

Lab Learning

- An assignment will be provided for the student to be completed within 48 hours of the absence **and** the student must email the lab instructor to make-up any skill/procedure competency or simulation experience within one (1) calendar week from the absence.

Clinical Learning

- A virtual make-up clinical will be available for one clinical absence to be completed within 48 hours of the absence.

Assignments not completed before deadline will result in a 1-point deduction per hour of class, lab, or clinical time from Professionalism Grade. If the student is unable to complete the assignment within 48 hours following the missed class/lab/clinical they must contact their instructor to request an extension.

Missed Exam Policy

Five (5) points (based on the 0-100% score) will be deducted from any exam score when the exam is taken after the scheduled exam date/time. It is the student's responsibility to email the instructor at least 2 hours prior to the scheduled exam, alerting the instructor of the pending absence. Exams must be made up, at the instructor's discretion, within 48 hours of the original exam administration time, or the student will earn a score of zero (0) on that exam.

Exceptions to the five-point deduction will be granted for the following circumstances:

- Death of an immediate family member: the student may decide whether to apply to the five-point leniency to visiting the loved one prior to death, being with family immediately following the death, or for attending a funeral. Immediate family members will be defined as: spouse, children, parent, sibling, grandparent, grandchild, step-children, step-parents, and step-siblings, parent-in-laws, children in-laws, sibling in-laws.
- Hospitalization of self or dependent minor at the time of the exam.
- Birth of the student's child.
- Illness for which a medical provider note states the student is unable to attend class.
- Court date that cannot be rescheduled.
- Military obligation.
- Other catastrophic event beyond the student's control, at the discretion of the instructor.

Please note the exceptions apply to only to one exam per semester. Documentation of the above events must be submitted to the instructor at the time of the make-up exam.

Absence related to surgery or injury

Students with absences resulting from surgical or physical injury must submit documentation to the Accessibility Coordinator from their healthcare provider indicating they are fit for clinical rotations without any physical or psychologic restrictions.

Absence related to pregnancy or religious observance

Please refer to the RVCC policies related to pregnancy and religious observance

- <https://catalog.rivervalley.edu/absence-due-to-religious-observation>
- <https://catalog.rivervalley.edu/pregnancy-and-parenting-accommodations>

Personal and Professional Behaviors

The personal and professional behaviors listed below are expected throughout the student's enrollment in the nursing program. Any behavior outside of a student role that results in loss of license, pending or current legal action, and/or termination of employment for unprofessional or uncivil behaviors may result in the student being dismissed from the nursing program.

- **Attentiveness** – Students are required to regularly attend class. The student is consistently on time for lectures, labs, and clinical experiences and stays until the conclusion of presentations or activities. The student is alert and demonstrates attentiveness during the presentation.
- **Demeanor** – The student has a positive, open attitude toward peers, instructors, and others during all interactions. He/she functions in a supportive and constructive fashion in group situations.
- **Maturity** – Students must possess the emotional maturity and stability to engage in professional interactions with faculty, staff, professionals, the public, and other students under a wide range of circumstances, including highly stressful situations. The ability to be flexible and adaptive in demanding situations is imperative. The student functions as a responsible, ethical, law-abiding adult. He/she is accepting of, and makes good use of, feedback and evaluations.
- **Cooperation** – The student demonstrates his/her ability to work effectively in large and small groups and with other members of the health team, freely giving and accepting in the interchange of information.
- **Moral and Ethical Standards** – The student respects the rights and privacy of all individuals, is knowledgeable and compliant with the American Nursing Association Code of Ethics and abides by all HIPAA and privacy policies per the RVCC nursing program, CCP orientation module, and the healthcare facility.
- **Personal/Professional Boundaries** - The student maintains separate personal and professional boundaries with faculty. Some examples of professional boundary violations include excessive self-disclosure on the part of the student, or students addressing faculty in an unprofessional manner.
- **Responsibility** – Students are required to submit documents prior to admission to the nursing program as well as updating such documents as they become due. The student needs to take full responsibility for ensuring all documents are current and submitted when due.
- **Accountability** - Students must demonstrate a willingness and ability to examine and adapt his/her behavior when behavior interferes with productive and harmonious professional relationships.
- **Safety** - Students are expected to provide safe care in all domains to patients they encounter during clinical experiences and to maintain fitness for duty throughout all clinical experiences. Students must be prepared to provide care to patients in a rapidly paced, physically and emotionally demanding environment.
- **Academic Integrity** – The student completes academic work honestly and in accordance with instructions. Plagiarism, unauthorized work sharing, use of unauthorized devices or reference materials, cheating or other

failure to adhere to instructions for examinations or assignments is a violation of the nursing program professional standards.

- **Personal Appearance** – The student’s personal hygiene and dress is expected to reflect the high standards of the nursing profession.
- **Provision of Care** - Faculty or on-site clinical supervisors who determine there is a potential or clear concern that the student is unable to maintain the provision of safe care to patients, or that the student’s actions or behaviors are detrimental to the functioning of the healthcare environment, shall remove the student from the clinical area. Depending on the reason for removal, appropriate college resources will be consulted. If an immediate concern is identified, a meeting with the Department Chair will be scheduled as soon as possible.
- **Chain of Command** – In nursing, like many other professions, concerns and conflicts are managed by movement along a “chain of command.” The chain of command in its simplest definition is the line of authority and responsibility along which decisions are made. Nursing Program students are expected to resolve concerns/issues by following the chain of command: immediate theory, lab, or clinical instructor, nursing advisor, Nursing Program Coordinator, Department Chair. Students should **never** attempt to resolve concerns by contacting clinical agency personnel directly.
- **Verbal/written communication** – all communication with RVCC faculty, staff, and students should adhere to acceptable, professional standards. All RVCC Nursing Student policies and expectations apply to the use of verbal and writing communication.
- **Social Media** – all RVCC Nursing Student policies and expectations of behavior apply to the use of social media. Students are prohibited from using social media to share confidential information about fellow students, patients, or clinical affiliations.

Civility in Nursing

Civility is a critical principle, behavior, and attitude of professionalism in healthcare. Civility is a behavior that:

- shows respect toward another
- causes another to feel valued
- contributes to mutual respect, effective communication, and team collaboration

All students are expected to behave with civility when interacting with other students, faculty, and other individuals involved in the teaching-learning process.

Uncivil Behavior Examples

Examples of uncivil behavior which are discouraged include but are not limited to:

- Demeaning, belittling or harassing others.
- Rumoring, gossiping or using damaging/demeaning language about a classmate, instructor, clinical agency, or clinical agency employee.
- Habitually interrupting or undermining faculty instruction.
- Lack of response to college communications, including not responding to email communication.
- Sending emails or posting information online or via social media that is inflammatory and/or confidential in nature.
- Yelling, screaming, or demonstration of inappropriate displays of temper at instructors, peers, clinical agency staff, or any RVCC staff.

- Threatening others, including physical threats and intimidation, verbal/nonverbal threats, and implied threats of any kind of harm (physical, emotional, reputational).
- Consistently arriving late to class/ lab, and clinical.
- Knowingly withholding information needed by a peer, preceptor, instructor, clinical agency staff, or nursing program staff.
- Discounting or ignoring input from instructors or preceptors regarding classroom and/or clinical performance or professional conduct specific to the profession and standards of nursing and expectations of the college.

Licensing, Legal, or Professional Behavior Issues

As a professional provider of health care in NH, a student is required to inform the Nursing Department chair of any potential issue related to their current professional license, legal violation, or behavior which results in termination from employment if the behavior violates any policy in the Nursing Student Handbook. ***Failure to declare any of the above issues prior to admission to, or while a current student of, the nursing program may result in immediate dismissal from the program.***

Legal violations or charges pending on a background check may require a student to withdraw from the nursing program until annulment of charges are granted.

Work-Based Learning Clinical Experiences

Work-based learning (WBL) is an educational opportunity for students to apply learning to the professional workplace environment, preparing the nursing student for practice as a new graduate nurse. Work-based learning clinical experiences have specific requirements per each healthcare facility and may differ from Nursing Program requirements. These requirements may include, but may not be limited to: immunizations, background checks, drug testing, written documentation and/or orientation modules. These requirements must be fulfilled by the student by the deadline set by the healthcare facility or RVCC nursing program. Failure to meet these requirements in a timely manner may result in a student being unable to attend clinical until the requirements are met and a clinical absence. Continued non-compliance with meeting the clinical requirements may result in an Administrative Failure (AF) in the course per the excessive clinical absence policy.

- Clinical experiences are arranged in local health care facilities in New Hampshire and Vermont, and may be scheduled on days, evenings, or weekends.
- Students may only administer medications under direct supervision of the nursing faculty per policy of the individual clinical site.
- Students must demonstrate medication math proficiency prior to administering medications in the clinical setting.
- Clinical agencies may require social security numbers in their entirety or in part for clinical requirements.
- Clinical placements are subject to availability and may require travel. Students are responsible for their own transportation.
- Any student who develops an illness, injury, or occupational exposure during a clinical experience will receive treatment by and be billed for services by the clinical facility. Student is required to immediately notify faculty and may need to report (according to facility policy) to other agencies. The nursing faculty will document the incident and report it to the Nursing Department Chairperson/VPAA.

- Students will be required to complete background checks and drug screenings at the entrance to and throughout the duration of the nursing program. Background checks and drug screenings may have differing timeframes, locations, requirements, and costs, depending upon individual clinical agency requirements.
 - Costs of background checks and drug tests are of the responsibility of the student.
 - Failure to complete background checks and/or drug screenings by RVCC and/or clinical agency-specified timeframes will result in a student being denied access to the work-based learning clinical resulting in an Administrative Failure (AF) in the nursing course.
 - Students with a positive drug screen will be denied access to the work-based learning clinical resulting in an Administrative Failure (AF) in the nursing course.
 - If a healthcare agency refuses to allow the student to participate in a work-based learning clinical experience based upon a criminal background check result or behavioral concern, an Administrative Failure (AF) will result.

Required Clinical Documentation

- Verification of current health insurance (photocopy of card)
- Current, unencumbered LNA licensure or equivalent skill set
- American Heart Association BLS for Healthcare Providers (photocopy of both sides of card)
- Criminal background check
- Verification of a two-step TB skin test (with 1-3 weeks in between first and second test) or a QuantiFERON Gold/T-Spot blood test for initial screening
 - If either the TB skin test(s) or the QuantiFERON Gold/T-Spot blood test is (are) positive, a student must have a negative chest x-ray and medical screening to rule out active pulmonary tuberculosis and to determine if treatment is necessary for either active tuberculosis disease or latent tuberculosis infection. Chest x-rays are valid from one year of administration and must be repeated annually.
- Returning senior-level students will either need a one-step TB skin test or QuantiFERON Gold/T-Spot blood test.
- Completed health history physical exam form with the following:
 - Completed vaccine series OR immunity to the following diseases:
 - Varicella (Chicken Pox)
 - Measles, Mumps, Rubella (MMR)
 - Tetanus, Diphtheria, Acellular Pertussis (TDaP)
 - Hepatitis B (and or signed waiver)
- Influenza - annual influenza vaccine due by October 1 of each calendar year or as designated by the Nursing/Allied Health Department Chair.
- Covid-19 Vaccination
 - The clinical portion of the nursing programs is offered at area health care facilities (“clinical sites”). Clinical sites establish their own requirements for persons entering their facilities for educational purposes. Clinical sites may have established vaccination requirements, including vaccination for COVID-19. As with all clinical program requirements, the clinical site reserves the right to deny participation to any student who does not meet required clinical criteria and do not follow clinical site policies. Individual programs of study do not have the authority to secure clinical experience(s) for students who do not meet eligibility criteria. Students participating in clinicals must adhere to the sites’ requirements. While these are not college requirements,

failure to adhere to the clinical site requirements will result in ineligibility to complete the Nursing program.

Student Roles and Responsibilities

Work-based learning (WBL) is an educational opportunity for experiential learning in a professional workplace. Students are provided with preclinical competencies, a clinical orientation of the facility, and a Clinical Evaluation Tool (CET). It is the student's responsibility to understand the goals, objectives, and evaluation criteria for competencies as well as adherence to all policies, rules, and procedures set forth by RVCC, the academic department/program, and the assigned workplace.

The student in the work-based clinical learning environment is required to adhere to professional behavior expectations, follow all the policies and procedures of the college, nursing program, clinical agency, and use clinical judgement to provide safe and effective nursing care to individuals assigned to their care.

Students are *NOT* permitted to:

- Perform delegated medical acts.
- Act as a witness under any circumstances or for any purpose, **including** medication administration.
- Provide telephone advice to discharged patients or their families.
- Perform any skill or procedure without the approval and/or supervision of the clinical instructor.
- Take verbal or telephone orders.
- Carry narcotic keys.
- Remove medication from a medication cart / medication station system (e.g., Pyxis) without the supervision of the instructor.
- Be left in sole charge of the department, work unit, or any patient/resident.
- Transport patients/residents alone without facility staff.
- Remove a medical record or a printout of the medical record from the work unit.
- Discuss patient information outside of the immediate clinical environment.
- Falsify any patient/resident record or any other document prepared or used in the health care organization.
- Use of health care organization's telephones or other equipment for personal matters.
- Eat, drink, and chew gum in patient/resident care areas.

Prohibited Conduct

Students found guilty of any of the following prohibited conduct may be immediately dismissed from the nursing program.

- Engage in behavior that causes or may cause physical, verbal, mental, or emotional abuse to a patient/resident.
- Reporting to clinical experience intoxicated or under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- Use or consumption of alcohol or other intoxicating substances on health care organization premises.
- Selling or distributing illegal substances while on health care organization premises.
- Bringing a weapon or something that could be construed as a weapon (e.g., guns, knives, etc.).
- Stealing from patients/residents, the health care organization, or employees.
- Sharing computer or medication station system - (e.g., Pyxis) login information.
- Login in as another person or use someone else's login information.

- Falsifying any patient/resident record or any other document prepared or used during, or in conjunction with, patient/resident care.
- Disorderly conduct, including fighting; acting in an obscene manner or using obscene, abusive, or threatening language; or horseplay.
- Smoking while in the role of a student nurse.
- Leaving the healthcare facility without the approval of the clinical faculty.
- Defacing or damaging the health care organization's property.
- Failure to observe health care organization or RVCC/CCSNH regulations and/or policies
- Failure to maintain the confidentiality of health care organization matters, including matters relating to patients/residents.
- Any action that destroys good relations between the health care organization and its employees or between the health care organization and any of its suppliers or patients/residents.
- Any behavior that is considered insubordination.

Dress Code

Students must present themselves in a clean, neat professional manner when attending work-based learning clinical experiences within or outside the clinical agency. A student who is inappropriately dressed or presents with an unkempt appearance will be dismissed from the clinical experience and receive a clinical absence.

Clothing: All clothing should be conservative and in keeping with the nature of the health care organization image and appropriate to the nature and scope of the position. Clothing should be neat, clean, pressed, well-fitting and in good repair with no holes or wrinkles.

Uniform: Royal Blue uniform top and pants for ASN students; Teal Blue uniform top and pants for LPNs. A solid color, short or long-sleeved top may be worn under the top for warmth or modesty. Minimum of one pocket on top and minimum of one pocket on pants.

Shoes: Shoes should provide good support and have a **closed toe and heel**. Clogs with a closed toe and heel are permitted. No sandals. Athletic shoes are appropriate if they contain minimal logos or colors. Black and/or white colors are preferred.

ID Badge: All students must wear a single identification badge that identifies them as a student. If the clinical agency does not provide a badge, the RVCC identification badge must be worn.

Watch: Student may use sweep-hand or calibrated digital display. You may not use any other device as a time piece (e.g., phone).

Emblem: The RVCC nursing emblem must be sewn on the left uniform sleeve, 2" from the shoulder seam to the top of the emblem. Emblem must be on all uniforms/lab coats.

Jewelry: No more than one, plain band ring. No more than two small post earrings in each ear. No tongue piercing. Avoid other visible body adornments.

Tattoos: Body art must be covered while at clinical.

Fingernails: Should not extend beyond fingertips; intact, clear nail polish may be worn. No artificial nails.

Hair: Neatly groomed and pulled back off and away from the face and shoulders.

Make-Up: In moderation. No use of scented cosmetics and toiletries.

Cell Phone: Cell phones may only be used per the school and health care organization policy. Absolutely NO texting, NO pictures, or personal internet use during clinical.

Technical Standards for Nursing Students

All students in the River Valley Community College (RVCC) nursing programs must be able to perform diverse, complex, and specific functions and skills. These attributes include, but are not limited to personal and professional skills, physical agility, medical safety, and other requirements that individuals must possess to be eligible for satisfactory completion of the program of study as well as for the desired field of nursing.

These attributes must be demonstrated with or without reasonable accommodation as described under the Americans with Disabilities Act. The qualifications established by the faculty include but are not limited to the following essential technical standards:

Motor Skills

- The ability to perform full range of motion of body joints, fine motor movements of the hands, and the ability to stoop and bend.
- The ability to elicit information from patients by inspection, palpitation, auscultation, percussion, and other assessment maneuvers.
- The ability to execute movements required to provide general care and treatment to patients in all health care settings including emergency treatment: e.g., transferring, lifting and turning clients, providing hygienic care, assisting patients in activities of daily living and providing cardiopulmonary resuscitation.
- The ability to lift up to 40 pounds of weight on a daily basis.
- The ability to carry objects weighing up to 40 pounds daily.
- The ability to push or pull an occupied wheelchair, stretcher, or patient bed daily.

Sensory/Observation/Communication

- The ability to observe a patient accurately at a distance and close at hand. This requires functional use of the senses of vision and hearing.
- The ability to perceive the signs of disease and infection as manifested through physical examination, including from images of the body surfaces, palpable changes in various organs and tissues, and auditory information.
- The ability to closely examine images or other forms of output created by diagnostic equipment. The ability to observe and appreciate non-verbal communications when performing nursing assessment and intervention or administering medications.
- The ability to use spoken and written English to communicate in a coherent manner with individuals of all professions and societal levels.
- The ability to convey or exchange information at a level allowing development of a health history; identify problems presented; explain alternative solutions; and give directions during treatment and post-treatment.

The ability to process and communicate information on the patient's status with accuracy in a timely manner to members of the health care team.

Professional Conduct/Behavioral Expectations

- The ability to utilize intellectual abilities, exercise good judgment, and promptly complete all responsibilities attendant to the diagnosis and care of patients and families.
- The ability to maintain mature, sensitive, and effective relationships with patients, students, faculty, staff and other professionals under all circumstances.
- The ability to recognize that one's own values, attitudes, beliefs, emotions, and experiences affect ones' perceptions and relationships with others.
- The ability to function effectively under stress and to adapt to an environment that may change rapidly without warning and/or in unpredictable ways.
- The ability to learn and abide by professional standards of practice.
- The ability to engage in patient care delivery in all settings and be able to deliver care to all patients including but not limited to children, adolescents, adults, developmentally disabled persons, medically compromised patients, and vulnerable adults.
- The ability to maintain composure when subjected to high stress levels.
- The ability to adapt effectively to changing environments, especially those with high tension levels.
The ability to respond in an emotionally controlled manner in learning situations and emergencies

Confidentiality of Health Information

The student will safeguard the client's right to privacy by maintaining confidentiality. Such communications may involve verbal discussions, written communication, or electronic communication. Only those people with an authorized need to know should have access to the protected information. Students will not discuss client problems in elevators, cafeteria, and lobby or in other inappropriate places.

Information discussed as an aspect of clinical or classroom teaching must not be discussed or repeated to other individuals. Students are prohibited from reading the medical records of family members and/or friends. Should faculty inadvertently assign the student to a family member or friend/acquaintance, the student is expected to request another assignment.

Disclosure of confidential information may subject the student to liability based on defamation or invasion of privacy, or HIPAA violation as well as immediate dismissal from the nursing program.

All clinical assignments will be de-identified by removing the information one could use to identify the patient or clinical setting. No patient records should be removed from the clinical setting.

Students will abide by the policies established by the clinical setting. Violation of either college or healthcare facility HIPAA and/or privacy policies can result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal from the RVCC nursing program.

Section IV: Academic Policies

General Grading

Nursing faculty will adhere to the College grading policy as defined in the College's Student Handbook.

To receive credit for a nursing course, the student must:

- a. Achieve at least a minimum grade of B- (80%), **and**
- b. Achieve a minimum score on the expected performance for the level of learning on the Clinical Evaluation Tool

* Note: **Final grades will not be rounded.**

Prerequisite courses must be successfully passed with a grade of “C” to continue with either the ASN program of study or PN Certificate program.

Issues and concerns about exams must be addressed with the course instructor within 48 hours of an exam being given. For any exam question that the student wishes to challenge, the student must notify the course instructor within 48 hours of the exam and provide evidence from a qualified resource used within the course.

Variance Report/Performance Tools/Academic & Clinical Warnings

Variance Reports, Performance Improvement Tools, and/or Academic/Clinical Warnings will be used to communicate to students in a formal fashion, any deviances from expected professional behaviors. Issues to be addressed include but are not limited to timeliness for written work, lack of clinical preparation, unsafe clinical practices, and non-professional behavior. Blank examples are listed on the following three pages. A copy of each document will be given to the student after it is signed. This document will be placed in the student's Academic Folder.

Repeating a Nursing Course

Each nursing course must be taken in sequential order and requires a letter grade of B- or higher and a minimum score on the Clinical Evaluation Tool to pass the course and progress to the next nursing course or graduate. Students who do not meet the minimum grades in the nursing course may request approval to repeat the nursing course. Students are offered one opportunity to repeat a nursing course. Both the clinical and the class must be repeated. Students must complete the entire nursing sequence of courses within three (3) years from the start of the first course in the RN program (ADNR116R) or two (2) years from the start of the first course in the PN program (NURS110). Repeating a nursing course is contingent upon space for student in the course and upon majority (> 50%) approval by nursing faculty.

Requesting approval for repeating a nursing course:

- Traditional students will submit a written request to the Program Director by October 31 for ASN Spring Semester; February 28 for Fall or Summer Accelerated semester; LPN - 60 days prior to the start of the nursing course.
 1. Written request must include:
 1. An explanation of factors leading to the lack of progression
 2. A corrective action plan to remediate the factors that prevented success in the nursing course
- Students who are in good standing and submit a substantive written request will be given an opportunity to meet with nursing faculty to request approval to repeat the nursing course.
- The Department Chair will communicate the decision to the student by a date after which all students requesting approval have been interviewed.

Withdrawing from a Nursing Course

If a student must withdraw from a nursing course for personal or health reasons, consideration will be given to allow the nursing course to be repeated.

Requesting approval for repeating a nursing course:

- Submit a written request to the Program Director by October 31 for ASN Spring Semester; February 28 for Fall Semester or Summer Accelerated semester; LPN - 60 days prior to the start of the nursing course.
 1. Written request must include:
 1. An explanation of factors leading to withdrawal
 2. Plan for success in the nursing course
- Students who are in good standing and submit a substantive written request may be approved to repeat the nursing course by the Department Chair.
- The Department Chair will communicate the decision to the student by a date after which all students requesting approval have been interviewed.

Student Academic Records

Academic records are maintained according to [RVCC/CCSNH policies](#)

The College policy on confidentiality of students' records is outlined in Student Rights and Responsibilities in the [RVCC Student Handbook](#) and is adhered to by the Nursing Department.

Academic Advising

All students at River Valley Community College are assigned an academic advisor. The advisor serves as the student's partner in determining and reaching his/her academic and career goals. Students are encouraged to meet with their advisor on a regular basis.

Disability Statement

The nursing department adheres to the River Valley Community College policy on reasonable accommodations and academic adjustments and with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, which requires adjustments or accommodations for students with documented disability. Nursing Students with disabilities who believe that they may need accommodations in this class are encouraged to contact the Accessibility Services Coordinator to set up an appointment as soon as possible to ensure that accommodations are implemented to meet your needs for the semester. Visit <https://www.rivervalley.edu/student-support/on-campus-resources/accessibility-disability-services/> for contact details and more information.

After meeting with the Disabilities Coordinator, students are **required** to meet with their nursing faculty and clinical instructors to discuss their needs, and if applicable any lab safety concerns related to their disabilities.

Nursing Student Handbook Acknowledgment Form

I, (print name) _____, acknowledge that I have access to the Nursing Student Handbook and have reviewed its contents. I understand that I am accountable for the information and policies contained in this Handbook and may contact nursing faculty to review areas I would like to review further.

Signature: _____ Date: _____