



Student Handbook 2020-2021



The University of South Carolina Aiken Bachelor of Science degree in nursing pin features the colors of red and gold. Central to the BSN pin is the Double Knot, a symbol of the integral and ongoing relationship between the University and the community. The state seal of South Carolina is boldly portrayed to emphasize that USCA is a state school. The rays of light at the top of the pin represent the light of knowledge.

Policies and procedures contained in this handbook are subject to change without notice and may be obtained via consultation with the Dean of the School of Nursing.

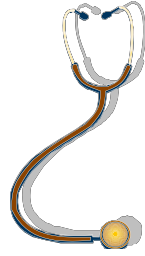
The University of South Carolina Aiken is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges to award baccalaureate and master's degrees. Contact the Commission on Colleges at 1866 Southern Lane, Decatur, Georgia 30033-4097 or call 404-679-4500 for questions about the status of the University.

The School of Nursing offers the Bachelor of Science in Nursing. This program is approved by the South Carolina State Board of Nursing and is fully accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education, One Dupont Circle, NW, Suite 530, Washington, DC 20036-1120; Telephone number: 202-887-6791; Fax number: 202-785-8320; e-mail address: www.aacn.nche.edu.

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University of South Carolina

Aiken School of Nursing

Student Declaration

I acknowledge that I have been informed that the *Bachelor of Science in Nursing Student Handbook* is available on the School of Nursing website. I also acknowledge that I have been informed that the Handbook is updated every year, with revised Handbooks being published on the SON website every August.

I understand that I am responsible for reading the *Bachelor of Science in Nursing Student Handbook* in its entirety and that I am accountable for all information and policies contained therein. **I understand that I am also responsible for reading the revised Handbook every August in its entirety and that I am accountable for all revised information and policies contained therein.**

Student Name (Print)

Student Signature

Date

Faculty or Staff Witness

Date

Introduction

School of Nursing Mission

The School of Nursing mission, in alignment with that of the University of South Carolina Aiken, is to endeavor to prepare students with the knowledge and skills necessary for success in a rapidly changing society. The School of Nursing contributes to the profession of nursing and to the development of students through the following goals: The provision of quality nursing education that prepares graduates with the nursing knowledge and competencies necessary to: 1) assume responsible positions in the delivery of health care and 2) utilize evidence based knowledge in the discipline of nursing.

The School of Nursing values the roles of diploma, associate degree, and baccalaureate degree prepared nurses within the discipline of nursing. The curricula for the BSN tracks offered by the School of Nursing provide a foundation of nursing knowledge, theory, and practice. The university setting, with course work from an array of disciplines, provides a framework within which personal and professional growth is enhanced.

Philosophy

Nursing, as an art and science with a diverse theoretical base, is a vital component of health care. The scientific base of nursing expands as theories are advanced, developed from practice, tested in practice- based research, and further refined for practice in a variety of settings. Because the knowledge base for nursing is continually advancing and health care is evolving, nurses must be prepared for change. The body of knowledge called nursing is unique; however, it is based in part on knowledge gleaned from the humanities, social, behavioral, and physical sciences.

Nursing practice includes critical thinking for the delivery of safe, quality care to individuals, families, groups, communities, and populations across the lifespan in a variety of settings and the promotion of health and wellness. Additionally, nursing practice involves accepting accountability for one's own and delegated nursing care and care of self. Nursing care is holistically based within a caring framework and is sensitive to the diversity of the clients served and their values.

As members of a profession, nurses function as participants in the health care team in an evolving health care system. Nurses have a responsibility to be cognizant of regulatory processes that impact the definition and implementation of nursing care. Commitment to professional development and life-long learning is necessary to maintain competence within the nursing profession.

Entry level educational preparation for the registered nurse currently exists at the diploma, associate, baccalaureate, and master's degree levels. The knowledge, skills, and abilities of graduates entering practice from these different nursing education programs vary widely. It is incumbent upon nursing education to differentiate the competencies of the graduates of each of the education programs to determine the appropriateness of the curriculum and instructional methods.

Nursing Education

Baccalaureate nursing education is designed to prepare professional nurses for a complex multifaceted role in the health care system. Today's graduate is expected to practice at a high level, quickly, with comprehensive knowledge, and in a great number of structured and unstructured settings. Professional nursing education is based on a strong liberal arts and scientific foundation. This

background provides the student with the knowledge that will support decision making and critical thinking. It exposes the student to diverse perspectives that mold values and beliefs that will influence later judgments.

The liberal education core is an integral part of the nursing education. Nursing courses are designed to help students make connections between theories and principles from the liberal arts, physical, social, and behavioral sciences and nursing education. This reinforcement of concepts aids the students in applying what they have learned to develop an understanding of situation in nursing practice.

To prepare students for a rapidly changing, complex system of health care, the faculty must engage students in active learning strategies that support a diversity of learning styles. The faculty believes that helping students to recognize their individual learning styles and active to participate actively in the learning process enables them to become independent, life-long learners.

USC Aiken School of Nursing Conceptual Framework

The BSN Program has two tracks of study, one for the generic student seeking initial RN licensure after graduation and the other for RNs with an associate degree or diploma in nursing who are seeking to complete the BSN degree.

The framework for the nursing curriculum is organized around the following three central concepts: 1) professional values, 2) communication, and 3) role development. Critical thinking is the process used to integrate these concepts and is an essential tool in systematically providing care to individuals, families, groups, and communities.

Critical thinking is purposeful and goal-directed (Halpern, 1984) and uses a variety of mental skills, such as clinical reasoning, inference, creativity, deduction, and prioritization to assist the individual in problem solving. For this process, the individual must identify that a problem exists, have the knowledge to address the problem and the capacity to use that knowledge effectively (Mezirow, 1991; Paul, 2004; Watson & Glaser, 1980). Critical thinking skills enable the nurse to continuously process information and systematically approach problems within their context (Mezirow, 1001; Cody, 2002).

Professional Values, Caring, and Diversity

Baccalaureate education in nursing provides for the development of professional values.

"Professional values and their associated behaviors are foundational to the practice of nursing" (American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN), 2009, p. 26). Acceptance of each individual's worth and dignity leads one to embrace certain concepts related to nursing care of individuals. The faculty have identified caring and diversity as central values for the University of South Carolina Aiken (USCA) baccalaureate curriculum.

Caring

Caring is a central concept of professional nursing. Caring includes "the nurse's empathy for, connection to, and being with the patient, as well as the ability to translate these affective characteristics into compassionate, sensitive, and patient centered care" (AACN, 2009, p.27).

Diversity

According to the AACN Task Force on Diversity and Opportunity (2016), "Diversity includes consideration of socioeconomic class, gender, age, religious belief, sexual orientation, and physical disabilities, as well as race and ethnicity. Diversity and equality of opportunity

recognize that individuals learn from exposure to and interaction with others who have backgrounds and characteristics different from their own. Recognizing and valuing diversity and equal opportunity also means acknowledgment, appreciation, and support of different learning styles, ways of interaction, and stimulating forms of discourse derived from interaction and collaboration with persons from diverse backgrounds and experiences” (para.3). Value development culminates in behavior that shows commitment to the identified values. This behavior, in turn, involves making decisions and judgments in nursing practice. Knowledge of ethics and ethical decision-making is essential for baccalaureate graduates who will be expected to apply a professional code of ethics to clinical practice and to use ethical principles in decision-making in clinical situations (Potter, Perry, Stockert, & Hall, 2013). The American Nurses Association Code of Ethics for Nurses (2015) is incorporated throughout the curriculum.

Communication

"Communication is a complex, ongoing, interactive process and forms the basis for building interpersonal relationships. Communication includes listening as well as oral, nonverbal, and written communication" (AACN, 1998, p. 10). Communication includes therapeutic strategies to enhance the nurse-patient relationship and effective interprofessional communication for successful collaboration to provide patient-centered care. Contemporary nurses utilize data from a wide range of resources. These resources include oral and written communication as well as technology. Critical thinking/reasoning skills are used to adapt communication techniques for diverse patient populations, health professionals, and interprofessional and intraprofessional contexts (AACN, 2009).

Role Development

Role development is an essential concept of undergraduate nursing education. The role of the baccalaureate generalist nurse includes an ability to function as a (a) provider of care, (b) designer/coordinator/manager of care, and (c) member of a profession.

Provider of Care

The generalist baccalaureate nurse provides both direct and indirect professional nursing care to individuals, families, groups, communities, and diverse populations across a wide array of environments to promote active participation in healthcare decision making. The generalist nurse practices from a holistic and caring framework and uses critical thinking to deliver ethical, multi-dimensional, high quality, cost effective, and evidence-based nursing care within the context of the patient’s value system. The role of the generalist nurse also includes advocating for patients, evaluating patient care outcomes, and providing leadership to improve patient care. The baccalaureate generalist nurse recognizes the global nature of health care and is proficient in the use of information technology (AACN, 2009).

Designer/Coordinator/Manager of Care

The generalist baccalaureate nurse functions autonomously and interdependently within the healthcare team and has the knowledge to delegate healthcare tasks and supervise and evaluate healthcare personnel. Accountability for the nursing care outcomes resulting from their own practice and delegated nursing care rests with the generalist nurse. “Nurses are members of healthcare teams, composed of professionals and other personnel who deliver treatment and services in complex, evolving healthcare systems. Generalist nurses bring a unique blend of knowledge, judgment, skills, and caring to the healthcare team” (AACN, 2009, p. 9).

Member of a Profession

Baccalaureate generalist nurses are members of the nursing profession and as such are advocates for patients and the nursing profession. This role requires the formation of a professional identity, accountability for a personal professional image, and a commitment to both personal and professional development. Requiring strong critical thinking, clinical judgment, communication, and assessment skills, the professional nurse participates in professional organizations and is active in policy processes aimed toward defining and shaping health care delivery and systems of care. In a constantly changing health care environment, the role of a member of a profession requires a commitment to life-long learning. The professional nurse accepts personal responsibility for professional development, including graduate study, and maintenance of professional competency. The professional nurse accepts the values and ethics of the profession and incorporates these values and ethical principles into clinical practice (AACN 2009).

The BSN Program has two tracks of study, one for the generic student seeking RN licensure after graduation and the other for RNs with an associate degree or diploma in nursing who are seeking to complete the BSN degree.

Outcome Objectives

The BSN curriculum at USCA is congruent with the Essentials of Baccalaureate Education as specified by the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (2009)

The graduate of the BSN program at USCA:

Essential I: Liberal Education for Baccalaureate Generalist Nursing Practice

Integrates and synthesizes theories and concepts from a general liberal arts education and builds upon these throughout the professional nursing curriculum.

Essential II: Basic Organizational and Systems Leadership for Quality Care and Patient Safety

Demonstrates leadership skills in various health care settings by designing, managing, and coordinating professional nursing care, in order to facilitate quality improvement in healthcare and ensure patient safety.

Essential III: Scholarship for Evidence-Based Practice

Provides professional nursing care based on knowledge derived from theory and research.

Essential IV: Information Management and Application of Patient Care Technology

Demonstrates technological skills in the search and retrieval of information, patient care technology, and computerized information systems.

Essential V: Health Care Policy, Finance and Regulatory Environments

Applies knowledge of financial and regulatory health care policies in professional nursing practice.

Essential VI: Interprofessional Communication and Collaboration for Improving Health

Outcomes. Communicates and collaborates with clients, families, and other healthcare professionals to provide high quality and safe patient care.

Essential VII: Clinical Prevention and Population Health

Applies strategies for health promotion, risk reduction, and disease prevention across the life span at the individual and population levels.

Essential VIII: Professionalism and Professional Values

Functions as a competent member of a profession demonstrating professionalism that reveals legal conduct and the values of caring and diversity, altruism, autonomy, human dignity, integrity, and social justice. Competence is maintained through lifelong learning.

Essential IX: Baccalaureate General Nursing Practice

Provides professional nursing care, undergirded by understanding and respect for variations and increased complexity, to individuals, families, groups, communities, and populations across the lifespan and across the continuum of healthcare environments with consideration for the increased use of healthcare resources. Critical thinking is the process used to assimilate this.

Academic Policies and Procedures**Abilities Statement**

Students entering the BSN Program will be required to perform certain skills requiring specific abilities. See the "Abilities Statement" that all students must sign prior to beginning the nursing program on the School of Nursing website under Forms.

Academic Integrity Policy

All students will read and sign the integrity statements upon entry to the SON. The statements will be signed only once and students will be held accountable to the USCA Academic Integrity Policy throughout their entire course of nursing studies. The forms relating to academic integrity may be found on the School of Nursing website under Forms.

Academic Integrity is the guiding principle of all aspects of the educational process. It is defined as respect for one's own work and the work of others. By becoming a member of the University of South Carolina Aiken community, each individual agrees to abide by this principle. The principle of Academic Integrity and all procedures supporting it shall be referred to as the "Academic Code of Conduct". It is the responsibility of every student at USCA to be familiar with the "Code", to adhere steadfastly to truthfulness and to avoid dishonesty, fraud, or deceit of any type in connection with any academic requirements*. Any student who violates this principle, attempts to violate it or who knowingly assists another in violating it shall be subject to discipline. As members of the USCA community, it is also the responsibility of every student, faculty and staff member to report violations of academic integrity to the faculty member in whose course these violations took place or to another person of authority such as a department chair/school dean.

The principle of Academic Integrity prohibits all forms of academic dishonesty – including cheating, lying, bribery and plagiarism. The following examples illustrate conduct that violates Academic Integrity, but this list is not exhaustive.

1. Giving or receiving unauthorized assistance, or attempting to give or receive such assistance in connection with the performance of any academic work.

2. Unauthorized use of materials or information of any type or the unauthorized use of any electronic or mechanical device in connection with the completion of any academic work.
3. Access to the contents of any test or examination or the purchase, sale, or theft of any test or examination prior to its administration.
4. Use of another person's work without proper knowledge of source, i.e. plagiarism.
5. Intentional misleading of any person in connection with any academic work (including the scheduling, completion, performance, or submission of any such work).
6. Offering or giving any favor or thing of value for the purpose of influencing improperly a grade or other evaluation of a student in an academic program.
7. Conduct intended to interfere with an instructor's ability to evaluate accurately a student's competency or performance in an academic program.

Plagiarism Statement

Plagiarism is a violation of the USCA Academic Code of Conduct and Academic Integrity and is the use of another person's words or ideas without providing credit to that person. It is the theft of another person's words or ideas to give the impression that you created them. These words and ideas may be from a variety of sources including printed works, speeches, presentations, and/or Internet sites and documents. Appropriate and complete referencing of words and ideas obtained from others is a requirement in ALL courses. If a work is anonymous, as may be the case with some Internet documents, it still must be fully referenced.

Charges of plagiarism will result if students fail to provide adequate documentation of another person's words or ideas, whether published or unpublished. Additionally, the purchasing of a pre-written paper, having someone else write a paper or complete an assignment for you with or without payment, and submitting another person's work as your own are other examples of plagiarism.

A charge of plagiarism will be handled in accordance with the USCA policy *Consequences for the Violation of Academic Integrity* outlined in the current USCA Student Handbook.

Only the appropriate faculty member can "authorize" assistance, use of materials, etc. Whenever a student is uncertain as to whether conduct would violate Academic Integrity, it is the responsibility of the student to seek clarification from the appropriate faculty member prior to engaging in such conduct. *Academic requirements include works submitted for academic progression or graduation or any graduate or undergraduate course work.

Advisement

Responsibilities of academic advisors and students in the advisement process and maintenance of student records:

Academic Advisor:

1. The School of Nursing Generic Academic advisor is Kathy Simmons, M.Ed. Nursing faculty members will be assigned as advisors for Generic Honors students. Mrs. Crystal Brinkley is the advisor for the BSN Completion students.
2. The academic advisor will document advisement activities and decisions on the “Advisement Notes” form at the conclusion of the advisement session or in the “Notes” section of DegreeWorks.
3. The assigned academic advisor will be responsible for:
 - a. Advisement of assigned advisees in an orderly progression through the prescribed and published program of study
 - b. Periodic review and documentation of the student’s progress, e.g., completion of courses in the prescribed program sequence, total credit hours successfully completed, accuracy of the expected date of program completion recorded; and
 - c. Accurate and updated maintenance of the student record, defined as including:
 - i. Program of Study
 - ii. Grade report of the semester most recently completed
 - iii Credits earned in the space provided on the Program of Study form.
4. Students may also meet with their academic advisor at any time during the semester to discuss any academic issues or any other concerns they may have.

Faculty Mentors

1. Each student in the Nursing Program will be assigned a Faculty Mentor. The mentor will meet with each newly assigned student at the beginning of the semester. Every student must make an appointment to meet with their mentor each semester before Priority Registration week. Advisement holds will be lifted by the Academic Advisor only after students have met with their mentor.
2. Students may also meet with their mentor or academic advisor at any time during the semester to discuss any academic issues or any other concerns they may have.

Student:

1. The student advisee is expected to become knowledgeable about all USCA and School of Nursing policies, e.g., pre-registration, etc. and graduation requirements.
2. **Students hold the ultimate responsibility for their progression and program completion, i.e., students are expected to monitor their own credits earned as well as grades earned and be knowledgeable of program requirements for graduation.**
3. A student is responsible for notifying both USCA and the School of Nursing of any name and/or address changes. Forms are available in the nursing office.
4. The Advisement Office will notify all students of advisement, pre-registration, and registration dates by USC Aiken email.
5. It is the student’s responsibility to adhere to procedures regarding advisement appointments, pre- registration, registration, and fee payments.

Americans with Disabilities Act

Specific information related to the ADA can be found in the current *USCA Graduate & Undergraduate Bulletin*

USCA Policy

If you have a physical, psychological, and/or learning disability that might affect your performance in a class, please contact the Office of Disability Services, B&E 126, (803) 641-3609, as soon as possible. The Office of Disability Services will determine appropriate accommodations based on medical documentation.

The mission of The Office of Disability Services is to facilitate the transition of students with disabilities to the University environment, and to act to provide appropriate accommodations for each student's special needs in order to insure equal access to all programs, activities, and services at USCA.

Core Performance Standards for the School of Nursing

The Core Performance Standards for the School of Nursing are available to all potential applicants, nursing faculty, staff and students to determine the need for ADA related accommodations. The following information also appears on the syllabus for each nursing course: "If you have a physical, psychological, and/ or learning disability which might affect your performance in this class, please contact the Office of Disability Services, 126A B&E, (803) 641-3609, as soon as possible. The Disability Services Office will determine appropriate accommodations based on medical documentation." Reasonable accommodations will be made on an individual basis; however the student must be able to perform in an independent manner or academic dismissal may occur. Examples provided below do not comprise an exhaustive list.

Core Performance Standards for the USCA School of Nursing

Requirements	Standards	Examples
<p>Mobility and Motor skills</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · A candidate must have adequate motor function to effectively perform and work with nursing problems and issues and carry out related nursing care. · Possess four (4) functional limbs (normal or artificial) that allow the student to perform abilities sufficient to move from room to room and maneuver in small places and possess gross and fine motor abilities sufficient to provide safe and effective nursing care. · Possess the ability to exert 20-50 lbs. of force occasionally; 10-25 lbs. of force frequently; and negligible to 10 lbs. of force constantly to move objects. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to assist with ambulating and therapeutically positioning patients; cardiopulmonary resuscitation; the administration of intravenous, intramuscular, subcutaneous and oral medications; the application of pressure to stop bleeding; the opening of an obstructed airway; the provision of patient/client daily hygiene care · Ability to move about patient's room, work spaces and treatment areas. • Calibration and use of equipment

<p>Sensory Visual Auditory Tactile</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Has normal or corrected vision with the range of 20/20-20/80, be able to distinguish color shades. · Visual ability sufficient for observation and assessment necessary in patient care. · Auditory ability sufficient for monitoring and assessing health needs, or corrected hearing ability within the 0-45 decibel range · Tactile ability sufficient for physical assessment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Ability to observe/assess and evaluate patient's condition and responses to treatments · Not limited to ability to recognize changes in skin color or color of drainage; distinguish gradations on syringes when drawing up medications; visualize the appearance of surgical or traumatic wounds · Ability to hear monitoring device alarm and other emergency signals · Ability to discern auscultatory sounds and cries for help · Ability to palpate in physical examinations and various therapeutic interventions; ability to perceive temperature changes and pulsations; and ability to differentiate different structures and textures.
<p>Professional Interactions and Communication</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Possesses communication abilities sufficient for appropriate and effective professional interaction with others in both oral and written form. · Possesses interpersonal abilities sufficient to interact appropriately and effectively with a diverse population of individuals, families and groups from a variety of backgrounds. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Ability to explain treatment procedures and /or initiate health teachings, document nursing actions and patient responses, establish appropriate and professional rapport with patients and colleagues. · Capacity to engage in successful civil discourse. · Participate in peer accountability.
<p>Mental/Emotional</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Possess the mental and emotional ability to adapt to the environment, function in everyday activities, and cope with stressors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Demonstrates behaviors appropriate to the situation, uses appropriate coping strategies.

Critical thinking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possesses critical thinking ability for effective clinical reasoning and clinical judgment consistent with B.S.N education. • Applies principles of logical or scientific thinking to define problems, collect data, establish facts, and draw valid conclusions. • Interprets and implements a variety of technical instructions. Deals with several abstract and concrete variables. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of the nursing process to identify cause and effect relationships and the development of patient care plans. • Demonstrates personal organization, practical application of safe health care delivery to include the use of technology and mathematical calculations.
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Policy about Summer Clinical Courses in the School of Nursing

Background

Clinical courses were not offered during the summer semesters in the School of Nursing until 2014. The impetus for this was that doing so allowed us to admit more students in the spring semesters. There is a larger cohort of students applying to the SON for spring than for fall, and the overall core GPA and science GPA is higher. In the spring of 2013, the SON began admitting more students for the spring semester, but encountered difficulties finding placements for these students in the special areas such as women’s health, child health, psychiatric nursing, and community nursing. As a result, we began offering the entire 2nd and 4th semesters (there are 5 semesters in the nursing program) of the nursing program in the summer to alleviate the stress of clinical placements. Doing this for these 2 semesters of study helps to balance the numbers of students in clinicals so that we can adequately provide for them.

There have always been summer offerings for non-clinical courses in the summer, and these have continued.

Selection of Students for Summer Courses

In order for students to take the clinical courses in the summer, there is an application process. Each spring, the Dean of the School of Nursing speaks to students in the first and third semesters of the program to explain the summer course offerings. In order to apply to take these clinical courses, the students must also take the non-clinical course that is in that same semester unless they have already completed them. This enables that cohort of students to move up to semesters 3 and 5 in the fall semester after completion of the summer courses. It relieves the clinical placement burden from these courses.

On the application, students put their grades for all nursing courses completed, and their average in courses currently taking. They also write any general education courses they still need before graduation, whether or not they have completed the Writing Proficiency Portfolio, and how many ICE events they still need before graduation. Each student also writes the reason for wanting to take the summer courses. There is no wrong reason.

The dean considers each application, and gives priority to students who have done well in prior Nursing courses, do not have gen eds left, are up to date on ICE events, and have completed their WPP if applying to take semester 4. Students also must be willing to take all 3 courses: the 2 clinical courses and the non- clinical course in that semester. Priority is also given to military students who need to complete their coursework in 2 years, students who have families and have

better childcare in the summer, students whose spouse will be relocating, and other individual issues students present. Wanting to graduate a semester early is the common reason, and that is acceptable.

The dean frequently consults with faculty advisors and mentors who know the student well when making decisions about accepting students for the summer clinical courses.

The courses taught during the summer are the same courses with the same course objectives taught during the fall and spring semesters, but may have different faculty. Teaching in the summer is not required of faculty. The clinical courses begin the 2nd week of Maymester and run through the end of summer II. It is more condensed than the regular semester, so each clinical course meets on a separate day. Students need to be aware that due to the condensed time frame, the semester may be more intense.

Other Students Taking Summer Clinical Courses

In order to offer the clinical courses in the summer, we need a minimum of 8 students for each course because that is the number of students in a clinical group. When there are not this many students in semesters 1 and 3 who want to do this, the dean accepts applications from students in semesters 2 and 4 who either dropped or failed the course and need to repeat it in the fall. It is not opened up to these students unless there are slots available. Some students who have dropped or failed have been successful taking the clinical courses in the summer, but some have not.

When students fail or drop a course in semesters 2 or 4 in the spring semester, and inquire about the summer option, they are clearly told it is not an option for them unless there is space. Exceptions may be made for truly extenuating circumstances, at the discretion of the dean.

Why Other Clinical Courses Are Not Offered in the Summer

The clinical courses in levels 1, 3, and 5 are not offered in the summer because of the sequencing of courses. Having students in those clinical courses in the summer would negate the benefit of accepting more students in the spring when we have more applications. It would put the school in the same place of not having enough clinical placements for students the following fall.

Attendance

Classroom or online attendance is expected. Attendance in clinical is **required** to pass the course. In the event of an unavoidable absence, the student must give prior notification to the clinical professor. An arrangement for missed/excused work is made at the discretion of the course coordinator.

Attendance Policy for Classes

All students are expected to be present for EACH class and to be on time. Absences will be excused for incapacitating illness, official representation of the University, death of a close relative, religious holiday, or other circumstances preventing attendance but beyond the control of the student. **It is the student's responsibility to obtain the missed class material.**

Attendance Policy for Exam Days

Attendance on exam days is mandatory. Exams will be rescheduled only in the event of documented student incapacity and at faculty discretion. If a student is

unable to take an exam on the scheduled day, the student must notify the professor **PRIOR** to the exam. The student, if excused for the absence, must schedule to make-up the test within two days of returning to class. Failure to do so will automatically result in a zero for that test.

Attendance Policy for Clinicals

To pass each clinical nursing course, students are **required** to attend all clinical experiences, be on time, and comply with the uniform and dress requirements as outlined in the current *BSN Student Handbook*. In the event that a student is absent from a clinical experience because of illness, inclement weather, or any other unforeseen circumstance, the student must:

1. Personally notify the instructor and course coordinator prior to the clinical experience or in the event of an emergency, within 24 hours.
2. Arrange with the course coordinator and instructor for clinical make-up. These arrangements should be made with the course coordinator by the next official school day.
3. Complete the assigned clinical make-up experience or activity according to the discretion of the course coordinator and availability of clinical resources.
4. Failure to follow the above instructions may result in failure of the course.
5. If a student has been absent from clinical on more than one occasion, it may not be possible for the student to make up the clinical experience. In this event, the student may receive a grade of “I” (Incomplete) or a non-passing grade and will not progress to the next level.

If there is an unexcused absence (for example: a planned or unplanned personal trip, any event outside a sponsored USC Aiken event, a sponsored USC Aiken event without prior permission from the course coordinator, or an illness without a physician’s excuse), the student will not pass the clinical portion of the course and will not progress to the next level.

6. Under no circumstances may students be excused early from clinical for any reason except an emergency.

Tardiness Policy for Clinicals

Students are required to arrive appropriately attired at or before the appointed time for all clinical experiences. In the event that a student will be late for a clinical experience, the student **must**:

1. Call the clinical instructor prior to arrival, give the reason for being late, and indicate the time of arrival on the nursing unit. (This means that each student must have the contact telephone information for the clinical instructor and the course coordinator.)
2. Arrange with the course coordinator and clinical instructor for make-up of lost time.

3. Complete the missed clinical assignment according to the discretion of the course coordinator and availability of clinical resources.
4. For Pediatric Clinical experiences only – in addition to the above, the student must notify the charge nurse of expected tardiness.

In the event of chronic lateness (more than once), a behavioral contract may be initiated. The student may also be sent home at the discretion of the instructor without the option of a make-up clinical day. Chronic lateness puts the student at risk for not reaching the standard required to pass the course.

Clinical Rotations

Clinical sites are used throughout the region. Students can expect to travel up to an hour away. Students also can expect to be assigned to evening and weekend clinical schedules.

Students are not allowed to care for any patient who requires an N-95 respiratory mask because this requires special fitting of the mask. These are usually patients who have been placed on airborne precautions, such as TB patients.

Guidelines for Clinical Placement

In order to provide the best possible clinical experience for students, faculty will make every effort to arrange clinical placements for students on a unit where the student does not work. However, in certain nursing specialties where clinical units are scarce, it may be necessary to assign students to a unit where they work. If a student is assigned to a unit where they work, the course coordinator will notify the nurse manager and the clinical instructor will notify the charge nurse/team leader that the student's role must not be confused with the work role and that the student must not be considered as staff while in the student role.

Refusal of a Clinical Agency to Allow a Specific Student Clinical Placement

If a student is refused permission to provide care in a particular clinical facility to which they are assigned, and reassigning the student to a different clinical facility is not a prudent, reasonable option in the opinion of the Dean of the School of Nursing, the student may not be able to meet course objectives and may not progress in the USCA School of Nursing.

Clinical Scope of Practice Policy

When nursing students are in clinical with their instructor, they must practice according to the scope of practice prescribed for the student clinical experience. A student who is a Licensed Practical Nurse must practice according to the level and scope of practice for a BSN Generic Student Nurse.

Critical Incidents Policy

Critical incidents which will result in failure to pass a course (grade of F) include but are NOT limited to:

1. Client Safety:
Is physically or verbally abusive to patient.

2. Communication:
Does not maintain client confidentiality.
**Intentionally falsifies records.
3. Critical Thinking:
Makes independent clinical decisions that are clearly not within the student's domain and that endanger the patient.
4. Responsibility and Accountability:
**Is dishonest: i.e., lying, cheating, stealing
5. Role Boundaries:
 - a. Fails to notify the instructor/preceptor when student knows a patient.
 - b. Contacts a patient or facilitates a patient in contacting another student outside the boundaries of clinical (i.e., giving a patient one's own or another student's phone number or contact information)
 - c. Returns to clinical site outside of school hours without permission of instructor.
 - d. Participates in preceptorship or shadowing without notifying course coordinator or clinical faculty in advance.
 - e. Refuses to follow appropriate chain-of-command for concerns related to clinical.
6. Incivility:
**Engages in inappropriate or unprofessional behavior and/or communication with peers, patients, clinical preceptor, clinical site personnel, and/or USCA SON faculty/staff. This includes verbal, nonverbal, electronic, and written incivility.

**These critical incidents are not necessarily course specific. Violation of these particular critical incidents will result in dismissal from the School of Nursing.

Clinical Requirements

Background Check

USCA affiliated hospitals and health care agencies require that a state and national background check be conducted on all direct patient care givers. Students must agree to report any felony or misdemeanor charges (excluding minor traffic related violations), which occur during their enrollment in the School of Nursing to the appropriate Program Director. Failure to report and engage in the resolution of current or future felony or misdemeanor charges and/or convictions in a timely (within 10 business days) and complete manner, and failure to provide requisite information pertinent to dispose or pending cases are violations of the University's Honor Code. Offenses will be reported to the student Judiciary System and may serve as grounds for dismissal from the School of Nursing.

The School agrees to use student information for admission screening and to obtain clinical education placements only.

The School and University make the final decision as to whether a student with a positive

report may proceed to matriculation. The clinical agency makes the final decision about whether a student with a positive report any be placed at that site.

Procedure:

1. Students will be advised of the policy regarding background check in the USCA School of Nursing BSN Student Handbook and on applications for admission to the School of Nursing programs.
2. Students will sign a “Consent to Release Background Check and Drug Screen Results” authorizing the School of Nursing to release the information regarding their criminal records check to clinical facilities required by law to have this information. This form may be found on the School of Nursing website under Forms
3. Anonymous results of the background checks will be sent to the Chief Nursing Officer of SC & GA clinical agencies in which the students are assigned for clinical. Permission to provide care in a clinical facility will be determined by the facility.
4. Students who are refused permission to provide care in a clinical facility to which they are assigned because of their positive criminal background check and/or illegal drug screen will not be allowed to take any further clinical courses and may be dismissed from the nursing program.
5. Background checks will be required of students and faculty according to the requirements of the affiliated clinical agencies.

USCA affiliated hospitals and health care agencies require that a criminal records check be conducted on all direct patient care givers. All Generic BSN and BSN Completion students admitted to the School of Nursing will be required to obtain a state and national background check that includes:

- Patriot Act
- Social Security Alert
- Residence History
- Criminal Records
- Sex Offender Index
- NW Health Care Fraud and Abuse Scam

Students must be aware that if they have been convicted of a crime other than a minor traffic violation, they will be required to report any conviction upon application for licensure.

Basic Life Support (CPR) Policy

All students are required to have current CPR certification. ***The required certification is Healthcare Provider offered through the American Heart Association.*** All students enrolled in nursing courses are required to maintain current certification in Basic Life Support (adult, child and infant CPR, conscious obstructed airway, and unconscious obstructed airway, AED use). **The certification must remain current for the entire academic year: mid-August through mid-May, and in the summer if taking clinical courses.** Certification cards must be provided to the School of Nursing by the stated deadline. The student will NOT be allowed to attend class or clinical until the requirement is met. **The school of nursing will NOT accept any written notification of class attendance, including rosters.** The only exception to this policy is if the student takes the BLS Course with the USCA School of Nursing, the roster will be acceptable as proof of having taken and passed the course. BLS courses are available at the end of every spring semester. The times are posted throughout the School of Nursing Building.

Student Health Requirements and Annual Updates

Students are required to meet health requirements of the University as listed in the USCA Bulletin. When students enter the School of Nursing and the clinical nursing course sequence, they are required to abide by all health requirements set forth by the USCA affiliating health care agencies.

1. Obtaining an initial health exam from their MD, PA or NP. Thereafter the student will submit a self-reported annual Update Physical Form.
2. Students will provide an initial two-step PPD. Thereafter an annual one-step PPD on the School of Nursing Annual Update PPD form. Students will submit initial proof of all required immunizations and/or titers) by the stated deadline. **If any of these requirements are not met by the stated deadline, the student will not be allowed to attend clinical.**
3. Providing evidence of current BLS certification (CPR Card) by the stated deadline. **If this requirement is not met by the stated deadline, he student will not be allowed to attend clinical.**

4. Documentation of titers or immunizations for the following:
 - a) Rubella
 - b) Rubeola
 - c) Mumps
 - d) TdaP
 - f) Hepatitis B
 - g) Varicella (statement of disease will not be accepted)
 - h) Seasonal flu vaccine

To comply with the mandatory requirements set forth by affiliating health care agencies, **health information: Update Physical, PPD and CPR must cover an entire Academic Year, mid-August through the end of the following April and must be updated by June of each year** according to the stated deadlines by the School of Nursing. If a student is taking clinical courses in the summer, this health information must be current during that time as well. **If a student fails to provide any of the above health information by the stated deadline the student will not be allowed to attend class or clinical until the requirement has been met.**

USCA offers a Health Services Program for students; however, these services are limited. Therefore, students are encouraged to carry accident and illness insurance.

3. Completion of the following forms (students will sign these at the beginning of their first nursing semester):
 - Confidentiality Form
 - Student Release Form
 - Ability Statement
 - Drug Policy
 - Criminal Background Check Release Form (Generic BSN & Non-practicing BSN Completion students)
 - Standardized Testing Contract (BSN Completion students exempt)
4. Additional physical, drug screen and background check may be required depending on assigned clinical facility. Student is responsible for the physical fee. Student nursing fees will pay for the drug screen and background check.
5. Signing the statement: “I understand that I am responsible for reading the current ***Bachelor of Science in Nursing Student Handbook*** in its entirety and that I am accountable for all information and policies contained therein.”
6. Providing their own transportation to and from clinical sites.
7. Attending all scheduled class/clinical functions.
8. Input into the School of Nursing through the established School of Nursing Committee structure.

Dress Code

Personal appearance is an important factor in the effective delivery of health care. Students are expected to wear the approved student nursing uniform in clinical areas, including simulation lab. Faculty have the prerogative to send students home for inappropriate dress and receive and unsatisfactory for that clinical day. The approved nursing uniform and related policies consist of the following:

Female and Male

1. A choice of three types of uniform pants and scrub tops to best suit the wearer body type are offered. Pants, worn at the natural waist, are to be hemmed to the top of the sole of the nursing shoe at the back of the heel. Students in Level IV Fall 2018 or after will wear Galaxy blue uniforms.
2. A solid white crew necked shirt may be worn under the scrub top. No other colors or styles will be permitted.
3. White scrub jacket
4. White stockings or white socks (with pants) and clean solid white leather professional shoes. Shoes must be comfortable, fit correctly and without open toes or heels, and without design.
5. Undergarments must not be exposed or visible through the uniform.
6. USC Aiken name badge is worn on the right upper side of the scrub top or jacket. Patch must be on the left sleeve of the scrub jacket.
7. Watch with second hand
8. Under certain circumstances, arrangements may be made for students to wear specified uniform skirts along with the regular uniform scrub top. White hosiery and white shoes must be worn. Under no circumstances are socks to be worn with a skirt.
9. Under certain circumstances students may be allowed to wear cultural or religious attire with the permission of the Dean of the School of Nursing.
10. Pregnant students must continue to comply with the dress code policy. Any adaptations or deviations must be approved by the course coordinator.
11. Under no circumstances may students wear their student uniforms to work. The student uniform is to be worn for School of Nursing clinical experiences only. Students are required to wear the full student uniform to clinical institutions to receive their clinical assignments.
12. On all occasions where students represent the USC Aiken School of Nursing (SNA or other school related activities), professional dress is required.

Note: Any clinical agency policy may supersede the School of Nursing policy.

Additional Dress Requirements

Hair: Hair must be styled in a manner that will maintain asepsis in client care and permit students to work without violating aseptic principles. Secure hair away from the face and without ornaments. Short bangs are appropriate; however, longer hair must be secured away from face.

Jewelry: Plain metal wedding band may be worn with the uniform. Neither the nursing program nor the health care facility assumes responsibility if jewelry is lost. No chain necklaces may be worn. Students are permitted to wear the Student Nurse Association pin with their uniform. Metal medical alert jewelry may be worn by students.

Body Piercing Pierced earrings are allowed only if they are very small and are not ornamental (small studs only). A maximum of two earrings per ear. Facial piercing is not acceptable.

Clinical agencies determine any exceptions to the above body piercing rules.

Body Art: All body art must be covered.

Fingernails & Perfume: Short fingernails are required to ensure client safety. No tips are allowed in health care facilities. Clear nail polish is permissible. The use of perfume is not allowed, as it is offensive to many persons who are ill or convalescing.

Chewing Gum: Chewing gum in the clinical setting is not allowed. Eating should be confined to areas designated by the facility. No smoking in uniform.

Personal Hygiene: Good personal hygienic practices are essential to health promotion. Students are also expected to wear clean, neatly pressed uniforms and clean hose/socks and shoes. Men should be clean-shaven or with neatly trimmed established beard or mustache.

Students who violate any of the uniform or dress requirements will be sent home for the reason, “not prepared for clinical” and will receive a clinical unsatisfactory for that day.

Contact Information

Procedure for Name, Address, and Email

Change Name Change:

1. Record name change in the records Office in the Penland Administration Building.
2. Inform the School of Nursing Office. Forms are available in the nursing office.
3. Change email address. Go the CSD Helpdesk in the B&E building for assistance.

Please be advised if you do not change your email address you may miss vital SON information. However, you will continue to be held accountable for all information emailed to students.

Address Change:

Address changes may be completed in SSC.

USCA Name Badge Policy

A USC Aiken name badge is required for all clinical experiences.

SON Drug/Alcohol Policy

The School of Nursing maintains a drug free environment. **All students will be required to submit to a drug screening test.** The cost of the drug screen and the background check are borne by the students and are included in the student fees. If any affiliating clinical institution will not allow the student to practice as a student nurse in their institution because of a positive drug screen, the student cannot attend any clinical experiences at any institution and will be dismissed from the School of Nursing. Failure to comply with a drug screen requirement will also result in dismissal from the School of Nursing.

Given the easy access to controlled substances in the health care setting and the potential risk to patients and others if health care associates are attempting to perform their duties while using or having used drugs or alcohol, the University of South Carolina Aiken School of Nursing has adopted

the following policy regarding drugs and alcohol. This policy is a promulgation of the rule for the purpose of health and safety. The use of drugs or alcohol poses a genuine and serious threat to patients, students, and faculty.

The sale, manufacture, distribution, purchase, use, possession, or reporting to school or clinical while impaired by intoxicants, hallucinogenic drugs, marijuana or other non-prescribed controlled substances is prohibited. The distribution, sale, purchase, use or possession of equipment, products and materials which are used, intended for use, or designed for use with non-prescribed controlled substances also is prohibited while a school or in clinical. Being at school or in the clinical with a measurable quantity of intoxicants, non-prescribed narcotics, hallucinogenic drugs, marijuana or other non-prescribed controlled substances in blood or urine is not allowed.

Students on prescribed drugs that alter thought processes or motor skills will not be allowed to attend clinical or class. Students on prescribed drugs are warned to avoid abuse or over-dose on these medications. These prescribed medications should not be transferred to any other person.

Definitions and Regulations

Certain situations may, at the discretion of the instructor or clinical agency, require screening for substance use and abuse. A student may be requested to undergo a blood test, urinalysis, or other diagnostic test under any of the following circumstances:

1. Where there is reasonable cause to believe the student is impaired by or that there is a measurable quantity of intoxicants, drugs, marijuana or narcotic while in class or in the clinical area.
2. After the discovery of any missing controlled substance or other unusual event in the clinical area, which the instructor believes may indicate a violation of this policy or a mishandling of controlled substances.
3. Upon successful completion of a drug or alcohol rehabilitation, up to 12 months after return to school.

Being under the influence of alcohol shall be defined according to the following:

Students are conclusively presumed to be under the influence of alcohol when alcohol level is 50 mg/dl or greater as measured via Breathalyzer. The USCA Public Safety Department will conduct the Breathalyzer test. Having a measurable quantity of unauthorized controlled substances or illegal drugs is testing positive at the detectable level.

The following activities may also be considered a violation of this policy:

1. Switching or altering any urine samples submitted for drug or alcohol testing.
2. Refusing to consent to testing or to submit a breath, urine, saliva, or blood sample for testing when requested by instructors.
3. Conviction under any criminal drug statute.

4. Refusing to sign a statement to comply with the School of Nursing's Drug and alcohol use/abuse policy.
5. Refusing to complete a medical questionnaire and consent form prior to testing or providing false and/or misleading information.
6. Refusing to complete the toxicology chain or custody form after submission of a urine or blood specimen.

The following may result in disciplinary action up to and including suspension or immediate discharge from the nursing program:

1. A student's refusal to immediately submit to:
A request search of his/her person or property, blood test, urine drug screen, or other diagnostic test.
2. A student has a positive laboratory result on such tests indicating impairment or prior use of intoxicants, non-prescribed narcotics, hallucinogenic drugs, marijuana or other non-prescribed controlled substances, or
3. If the student submits an adulterated specimen.

Students with a drug or alcohol problem who voluntarily come forward to seek assistance will not be treated in a negative manner. These students will be expected to seek counseling until which time they are declared recovered. Follow-up drug evaluations will be expected up to 12 months after return to school. A statement from the physician is required prior to the student's return to school. Students will be asked to read this policy and sign it at the beginning of the BSN Program.

Use of Social Media by School of Nursing Students

While social media allows the University to reach many audiences including faculty, staff and students, use of social media by School of Nursing students presents special concerns for privacy and confidentiality. The general use of social media by SON students related to confidential information about the School (including the faculty, staff and students), patients or SON-clinical affiliates (agencies with which the SON has entered a contractual relationship to provide clinical experience opportunities for students) is notably restricted.

Social media are defined as, but not limited to, web-based or mobile technologies used for interactive communication. Examples of social media include, but are not limited to, collaborative projects (e.g., Wikipedia), blogs and microblogs (e.g., Twitter), content communities (e.g., YouTube), social networking sites (e.g., Facebook), virtual game worlds (e.g., World of Warcraft), and virtual social worlds (e.g., Second Life). Regardless of how these forms of media are used, students are responsible for the content they post or promote. Content contributed on these platforms is immediately searchable and shareable, regardless of whether that is the intention of the contributor. Social media postings that are threatening, intimidating, inciting violence, libelous, falsely-stated or obscene are not

protected under the First Amendment. Once posted online, the content forever leaves the contributing individual's control and may be traced back to the individual in perpetuity.

Official SON electronic communication regarding academic classes or academic schedules will occur only through School-sanctioned channels, e.g., USC Aiken email, listservs, Blackboard, and USC Aiken websites. Electronic communications outside these channels are not endorsed for academic courses.

SON students are prohibited from disclosing the following through social media:

- Any reference to their clinical experiences, any photographs of clinical areas, any references to patients whatsoever.
- Any information about persons with whom the student had contact through clinical experiences (including patient family members or friends), clinical facility staff or clinical institutions.
- Any information about the School of Nursing, its employees, and/or students.
- Any comment that expresses or implies sponsorship or endorsement by the School of Nursing or the University of South Carolina Aiken, unless officially authorized to act in this capacity for this purpose on behalf of the University or the School.

If a student identifies himself/herself as such online (e.g., list affiliation with the School of Nursing in their Facebook profile), a disclaimer must be added that any opinions or views expressed do not represent the opinions of the School of Nursing or the University of South Carolina Aiken.

Students in violation of this policy may face disciplinary action up to and including expulsion from the program.

Related reference: • NCSBN White Paper - https://www.ncsbn.org/Social_Media.pdf

Grading Policy: SON Grading Scale:

Passing Grades

Failing Grades

A = 91-100

C = 77-79

B+ = 89-90

D+ = 75-76

B = 83-88

D = 70-74

C+ = 80-82

F = Below 70

According to School of Nursing Policy, a grade of "C+" or better is required in all nursing courses. Grades will not be rounded up. In some Writing Intensive courses, the paper grade may not be included in the final grade average unless an 80% average is earned on objective exams.

Policy for Online Exam Dates:

Scheduled Online Exam dates are mandatory. Online exams will be rescheduled only in the event of documented student incapacity and at faculty discretion. If a student is unable to take an online exam on the scheduled date(s), the student must notify the professor PRIOR to the exam. The student, if excused for the absence, must schedule to make-up the test within two days of the test date(s). Failure to do so will automatically result in a zero for that test.

Clinical Grade

Failure to reach the standard required to pass the clinical portion of the course will result in not passing the entire clinical course (clinical and classroom) and students will not be able to progress to the next clinical level. The assignment of a non-passing grade (C, D+, D or F) will be at the discretion of course faculty in consultation with the Dean of the School of Nursing.

Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI) Course Requirements

Healthcare employers expect registered nurses to have a working understanding of quality improvement (QI) and evidence-based practice (EBP) concepts, often requiring staff nurses to participate in projects that draw upon this knowledge. To adequately prepare USC Aiken nursing students for this role, the SON integrates quality and safety education for nurses across the curriculum. The content of this education, developed by IHI, consists of 13 modules. These modules are part of the course requirements in the USC Aiken BSN generic program. When all modules are completed, students receive the IHI's Basic Certificate in Quality and Safety. The assigned modules must be completed in order to pass the course in which they are assigned.

Judicial Processes

Student Grievances

The School of Nursing at USC Aiken strives to provide a positive learning environment for all students. However, if a student has a grievance, the student should follow the Grievance Procedure outlined in the current *USCA Student Handbook*. The School of Nursing supports and abides by the policies and procedures outlined in the current *USCA Student Handbook*, for resolution of student grievances. Student grievances address any academic complaint in which, in the student's judgment, the student has been treated unfairly or improperly. Students seeking redress of grievances may do so without fear of reprisal.

The following issues cannot be addressed using the above grievance procedure: sexual harassment, disciplinary decisions, housing appeals decisions, residency classification decisions, traffic appeals decisions or any other type of decision where a clearly defined appeal process exists.

Student Judicial Process

The University of South Carolina Aiken, as an institution of higher education, accepts its obligation to provide for its students, faculty, and staff an atmosphere that protects and promotes its educational mission and guarantees its effective operation. The Student Judicial Process is outlined in the current *USCA Student Handbook* and includes but is not limited to: Academic Code of Conduct, Disciplinary Procedures for Violations of Academic Integrity, Due Process, Student Conduct, and

Procedures for Responding to Violations of the Non-Academic Code of Conduct. The School of Nursing adheres to all policies and procedures outlined in the University Student Judicial Process.

Students' Right to Petition

Students have the right to petition the School of Nursing regarding School of Nursing Policies. The petition process is begun by requesting a petition form from the Dean of the School of Nursing. The form must be signed by the student's advisor and the Dean of the School of Nursing. A copy of this form may be found in the Nursing Office or on the School of Nursing website under Forms. The School of Nursing Admissions, Progression, and Graduation (APG) Committee is responsible for reviewing and hearing student petitions. If a student is not satisfied with the decision of the School of Nursing APG Committee, the student has the right to appeal the decision to the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs. A subsequent appeal may also be made to the Chancellor of USC Aiken. Information regarding the general University appeal procedures may be found in the current *USCA Student Handbook*.

Part-Time Schedule

The SON does not offer a part-time option for students except under extenuating circumstances. A student must have **prior approval via a petition to the Admission, Progression and Graduation Committee: All nursing courses for the BSN degree must be completed in three and one half calendar years.** Once approved for a part time schedule in a single semester, nursing courses must be sequenced as follows:

Level IV:

NURS 312, Pathophysiology in conjunction with NURS 307, Health assessment, must be taken first.

NURS 201, Fundamental Skills in Nursing, in conjunction with NURS 202W, Theoretical Foundations of Nursing must be the last course taken during Semester IV.

Level V:

NURS 301, Pharmacology, is a pre or co-requisite for NURS 309.

NURS 309, Adult Health Nursing, must be completed before NURS 323, Women's Health Nursing.

Level VI:

NURS 322, Psychiatric Nursing and NURS 310, Adult Health II must be completed before Level VI. A student with approval for a part-time plan of study for this semester may take NURS 413 and NURS 417 together first, followed by NURS 310 and NURS 322; or may take NURS 322 and one of the non-clinical courses followed by NURS 310 and the other non-clinical course in this level.

Level VII:

NURS 324 must be completed before NURS 315.

Level VIII:

NURS 418, Entry into Practice and NRUS A425 (Senior Practicum must be taken in the student's last semester.

Progression and Retention Policies

Students enrolled in the BSN major and admitted to the School of Nursing must abide by the following:

1. A grade of “C+” (80%) or better is the standard required to pass all nursing courses.
2. Any time that nursing students incur a second “C” or lower in the same nursing course in the nursing major requirement they will be dismissed from the School of Nursing. Any time that nursing students incur two “C”s or lower in different nursing courses of the nursing major requirement, they will be dismissed from the School of Nursing.
3. Grade forgiveness may be requested for one nursing course only (This does not negate the stipulations in #2. Grade forgiveness will affect overall GPA only).
4. Any nursing course in which the student does not reach the standard required to pass (C+), the course must be retaken at the USC Aiken School of Nursing.
5. A grade of ‘C’ or better in any non-nursing prerequisites to other courses is required before progression to the next course.
6. A USC Aiken system cumulative GPA of 2.0 must be maintained for continued enrollment in the baccalaureate program.
7. NURS A 418 and NURS A425 are required during the last semester of degree work for generic students. NURS A450 or NURS A460 must be the last course taken in the RN to BSN track.
8. Students must complete all nursing courses in three and a half (3.5) calendar years after acceptance into the clinical courses.
9. A nursing major in good standing may have a one-semester absence from clinical courses for any reason. In the interest of patient safety, following an absence of more than one semester from clinical courses, regardless of reason, the returning student must demonstrate readiness to resume studies by meeting these requirements immediately prior to the re-entry semester:
 - 1) satisfactory completion of the final exam or the ATI Proctored Examination from the most recent, successfully completed clinical courses
 - 2) satisfactory completion of a head-to-toe assessment
 - 3) satisfactory demonstration of critical clinical skills as defined by course coordinators of the most recent, successfully completed clinical courses
 - 4) evidence of medication calculation proficiency equivalent to that from the most recent, successfully completed level (maximum of 3 attempts prior to the first clinical)
 - 5) satisfactory completion of the pharmacology test from the most recent, successfully completed clinical courses.

Unusual circumstances, such as partial completion of the most recent semester prior to the absence (e.g. only 1 of 2 clinical courses successfully completed), will be evaluated by the School of Nursing’s APG Committee on an individual basis.

If the student is unsuccessful in meeting these requirements, the student will need to repeat the most recent, successfully completed clinical courses before moving forward in the program.

10. A student is allowed a maximum of three (3) withdrawals from nursing courses.
11. A student may enroll in a single nursing course a maximum of two (2) times.
12. If a student drops all courses in the first semester of the nursing program, that student must meet with the faculty mentor and academic advisor and will be required to reapply to the SON understanding that readmission is not a guarantee.

Student records will be monitored for failures / suspensions at the end of each semester by nursing faculty. Students will be notified of failures and/or suspension from the BSN program.

Testing

Medication Calculation Proficiency Testing Policy

A Medication Calculation Proficiency test will be given at each level. A maximum of three attempts will be given to each student to reach the passing score.

- Level IV: a grade of **90%** is required to pass.
 - Levels V & VI: a grade of **95%** is required to pass.
 - Levels VII & VIII: a grade of **100%** is required to pass.
1. If a student does not pass the test on the first attempt, the student will not be allowed to give medications in clinical and must remediate with either the appropriate module in *Calculating Drug Doses* or with materials provided by the course faculty. This applies to both clinical courses in any level.
 2. If a student does not pass the test on the second attempt, the student cannot attend clinical until the test is passed, must remediate again with the appropriate materials, and must meet with the course faculty member. This applies to both clinical courses in any level.
 3. After the 3rd failure the student who has not reached the standard required to pass the course has the option of withdrawing from both clinical courses in that level or receiving a grade of “F” in both clinical courses in that level.

Standardized Testing

Students will be required to take national standardized tests throughout the program. Specific information about the tests will be included in the appropriate course syllabi.

Graduation Requirements

Intercultural Enrichment (ICE): A total of 16 are required for all students. Students will not be approved to receive their degree until they have met the ICE requirement. Freshman students will

attend at least 2 ICE events per academic semester. Transfer and returning students will be awarded ICE credits depending on the number of hours transferred. All transfer and returning students will be required to do a minimum of four.

Writing Intensive (WI): 3 required; at least one in the major. Transfer students: 1 WI for each 30 hours. There are 5 WI courses in the clinical nursing curriculum.

Writing Proficiency Portfolio (WPP): serves to certify each student's writing proficiency within the context of general education assessment, and to make all students aware of the necessity for developing and transferring their writing skills beyond the composition sequence. The WPP consists of 3 papers written by the student using set guidelines. The WPP with the guidelines can be purchased in the USCA bookstore. Nursing students are required to complete the WPP prior to entering nursing level VIII. This requirement may also be completed by taking ENGL 201 Writing in the University.

Health

Bloodborne Pathogen Exposure Policy (Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C, and HIV)

All exposure incidents in the clinical agencies and the skills laboratory must be reported, investigated, and documented. When a student incurs a blood borne pathogen exposure incident, it must be reported immediately by the student to the clinical faculty and/or preceptor. **Immediate action must then be taken.** The clinical faculty member and/or preceptor must report the incident to clinical placement agency officials and ensure that the agency protocol for blood borne pathogens is followed. **The clinical faculty** and/or preceptor must notify the Dean of the School of Nursing as soon as possible after treatment has been started. The clinical faculty member/preceptor must tell the Emergency Department that the bills will be covered by Workmen's Compensation at USCA.

Procedure for Injury

- If skin is punctured by a contaminated sharp, or broken skin or mucous membrane is splashed with blood or body fluid, immediate personal action is required.
- **Do not delay treatment for any reason.**
- If possible, wash or flush the exposed area with soap and/or water immediately.
- Be sure to inform medical personnel that the injury is an exposure to blood borne pathogens and/or a needle stick.
- The student must report the exposure to the clinical faculty member and/or preceptor **IMMEDIATELY** and then follow the agency protocol for blood borne pathogen exposure.
- For students working in Satellite Clinics or home health situations, the student must report the incident to the preceptor and/or faculty as soon as possible, **but must go immediately to the nearest Emergency Department without delay.**
- Once treatment has been received, the clinical faculty member/preceptor and student must complete the HR documentation and the School of Nursing Event Reporting form (found on the School of Nursing website under Forms). Should the blood exposure occur on a Friday afternoon, the documentation may wait until Monday following the exposure.

Adopted 12/2004; Reviewed 6/06; 6/07; 6/08; 10/09; 6/10, 12/14, 6/16

Prevention of Transmission of HIV/HBV

The School of Nursing, in accordance with the recommendation of the American Association of Colleges of Nursing, has adopted a policy encompassing mandatory vaccination for HBV and education, universal precautions and other prevention techniques for HIV. The policy conforms to the requirements of local, state, and federal laws and the Centers for Disease Prevention and Control guidelines for preventing transmission of HIV/HBV, as well as those of the parent institution and clinical facilities. The policy recognizes individual rights, equal opportunity, voluntary testing, and confidentiality of test results and health records. The policy contains procedures for receiving, managing, and counseling those who may have been exposed to HIV. It states that nursing personnel and nursing students cannot refuse to care for those with HIV, HBV, or AIDS. For students, faculty, and staff who are HIV positive, reasonable accommodation will be made by the school to allow continuation of the education or career. The policy will be reviewed periodically for scientific correctness. All students shall have on file evidence of attendance at an educational program related to HIV and HBV. Prior to entry into clinical practice, nursing students must provide an HBV vaccination record; or documented history of HBV infection; or antibody status (positive titers) showing previous antigen response to HBV. The series of vaccine consisting of 3 doses over a six-month period will be required at the student's expense.

Procedures

1. The Curriculum Committee of the BSN program shall coordinate the educational and curricular aspects of the HIV and HBV program.
2. Clinical faculty are responsible for monitoring the practice of students in the clinical area and enforcing prudent infection control policies and procedures as defined by the clinical agency, to include mandatory safe work practices and the use of appropriate protective equipment.
3. Documentation of HBV vaccination record; or documented history of HBV infection; or antibody status (positive titers) showing previous antigen response to HBV will be maintained in each student's file.

Initial HBV/HIV Training Schedule Students entering NURS 201

Upon admission to the clinical nursing courses, the student is to complete an initial training in Universal Precautions, Bloodborne Pathogens and establish HBV immunization status. The initial training is done with students entering NURS 201. Upon completion of the instructional phase, the student completes a posttest evaluation tool.

Workers' Compensation: If a student incurs an injury while in clinical, the student must notify the clinical instructor immediately and depending on the severity of the injury, go to the closest Emergency Room or designated facility used by USCA for treatment. The designated facility is the Family Medcenter (two locations 216 Edgefield Ave. and 2678 Whiskey Road). Should a prescription be needed, the student should go to the Family Pharmacy at 333 Newberry Street NW. As soon as possible, the student must complete the "Employee Injury Report" and the Clinical instructor must complete the "Supervisor Report". These forms may be printed from the HR Forms web-site at <http://hr.sc.edu/hr/forms.htm>

The forms are listed under "Workers' Compensation" (listed in alphabetical order).

The forms must be submitted to the Human Resources Office as soon as possible. The employee

should notify the Medical Center and the Pharmacy that their injury is a result of an on-the-job injury so claims will be filed properly as a workers comp claim. Additionally, after any type of incident or accident, the USCA School of Nursing Event Reporting form must be completed and submitted to the nursing office. The Event Reporting form may be found on the School of Nursing website under Forms.

Professional Expectations

Behavioral Contracts

In the event that a student exhibits behavior that is unprofessional, disrupts the classroom and/or clinical, or is deemed by the Faculty and Dean to put the student in jeopardy of course(s) failure, the student will be placed under a behavioral contract. The terms of the contract will vary according to the aberrant behavior being demonstrated by the student. The duration of the contract may be for one semester or for the remainder of the student's tenure at the USCA School of Nursing.

Classroom Behavior

As per the *USCA Student Handbook*, it is the instructor's right to remove from the classroom any student who disrupts or disturbs the proceeding of the class. In extreme cases, the faculty member also has the right to request assistance from campus security. If the student who has been ejected causes similar disturbances in subsequent meetings of the class, he/she may be denied admittance to the class for the remainder of the semester and assigned a grade of "F".

Professional Ethics Policy

Information regarding patients and their personal lives is confidential. Discussion of the patient and confidential information should be limited to those persons directly responsible for that particular patient. Paperwork discussing clients should not contain names or other information that will identify the patient. **Failure to uphold the confidentiality of a patient constitutes a critical incident which will result in failure of the course.**

Electronic devices:

- Audio recording of class is by permission of the course faculty only.
- Head phones and media players for white noise are NOT permissible during testing sessions, except when mandated by Disability Services (see Disability Policy above).
- **Video recording or still photography by students is not permitted at any time without permission from the instructor. This includes classroom, laboratory, and clinical settings.**
- It is unacceptable to receive or send voice calls or text messages during classroom or clinical sessions. The nursing office telephone number is 803-641-3277. Family should be directed to use this number for emergency needs to contact you in the classroom or clinical. Clinical faculty have a cellphone for the SON to contact them in the clinical setting. Requests for exceptions to keep cell phones on vibrate may be made at the discretion of the course coordinator on a day to day basis. During a known personal crisis, it is the student's responsibility to inform the faculty to be aware of potential emergency contact.
- Faculty may allow use of electronic devices during classroom as is appropriate for a class activity. Faculty may confiscate cellphones or computers for inappropriate use during classroom, laboratory, or clinical times.

- Students are not allowed to wear watches during exams.
- Failure to comply with the above instructions may result in disciplinary action which may include dismissal from the program.
- The USC Aiken School of Nursing will follow the guidelines from the National Council of State Boards of Nursing regarding the use of social media. <https://www.ncsbn.org/index.htm>
- **The USCA School of Nursing will follow the guidelines from the National Council of State Boards of Nursing regarding the use of social media.**

Requirements for Application for Licensure in Nursing

Prior to completion of the last semester of study, students are expected to apply for the nursing licensing examination, NCLEX-RN, and apply for licensure to the South Carolina State Board for Nursing or other Board of Nursing in the jurisdiction where the student will be employed after graduation. Conviction of a crime other than a minor traffic violation could result in ineligibility for nursing licensure. Under these circumstances, early notification of the appropriate state board of nursing is recommended in order to clarify mechanisms related to determining eligibility. This policy is detailed in the Appendix of this *BSN Student Handbook*.

As of May 2009, Criminal records checks will be required for licensure; dismissed prosecution for writing a dishonored check is not an act of moral turpitude.

SECTION 1. Chapter 33, Title 40 of the 1976 Code is amended by adding:

"Section 40-33-25. (A) In addition to other requirements established by law and for the purpose of determining an applicant's eligibility for licensure to practice nursing, the department may require a state criminal records check, supported by fingerprints, by the South Carolina Law Enforcement Division, and a national criminal records check, supported by fingerprints, by the Federal Bureau of Investigation. The results of these criminal records checks must be reported to the department. The South Carolina Law Enforcement Division is authorized to retain the fingerprints for certification purposes and for notification of the department regarding criminal charges. **Costs of conducting a criminal history background check must be borne by the applicant.** The department shall keep information received pursuant to this section confidential, except that information relied upon in denying licensure may be disclosed as may be necessary to support the administrative action.

SON Committees and Organizations

Student Representation on Committees

Each standing committee of the School of Nursing, except those so designated, shall include student members. Student members shall have voting privileges unless otherwise designated in these rules. Student representatives shall be selected by their peers through an election process. Each student nominates candidates for committee membership and subsequently votes on nominated candidates. Elections are held each fall semester. The School of Nursing Dean or designee coordinates the elections.

The following criteria will pertain to all student committee members:

1. Term of membership shall be one year. The student may be reelected for a second term.
2. A student may not serve on more than one committee concurrently.
3. In the event that confidential student information is to be discussed, the student committee member will be excused for that portion of the meeting.

If student members are not elected by October 1 of any year, the Chair of the standing committee will appoint members who meet the above criteria.

Adopted by Nursing Faculty 8-19-87/ Revised and approved 5-11-90/Revised 8-95; 12-96;7-99;6-20009-01;7-02;7-03;5-04;6-05;6/06; Reviewed 6/07; 6/08; 6/08; 6/09; 6/10 Reviewed and Revised 6/12; 8/13 Reviewed and Revised 8/13, 12/14; 6/16

USCA School of Nursing Student Nurses Governance (SNG)

- The purpose of the USCA School of Nursing Student Nurse Governance is to:
 - advocate for all nursing students.
 - encourage good fellowship among students.
 - create a sense of unity and facilitate communication between faculty, staff, students and the USCA Student Government Association.
 - identify student concerns and act as representative of those concerns, actively implement change in areas of student concern.
 - inform students of current events, upcoming issues, and potential problems.
- Membership is automatic on acceptance to the USCA School of Nursing and is free of cost.
- An election of officers is held annually.
- Two School of Nursing faculty members serve as advisors.

The current bylaws for SNG are located on the SON website.

South Carolina Student Nurses Association (SNA-SC)

- The USCA SNA chapter of SC-SNA is the pre-professional student organization and provides participation in health-related activities on campus and in the community. USCA has an active, growing chapter, and all students are expected to join.
- The faculty of the School of Nursing strongly encourages each student, to join the National Students Nurses Association (NSNA) which includes membership in the South Carolina Student Nurses Association (SCSNA).
- NSNA members have the opportunity to expand their professional horizons through attendance at the SC-SNA yearly State Convention, and at the annual NSNA Convention. These events help develop patterns of professional behavior, qualify for scholarships and competitions, and develop strong friendships with fellow members from across the state and nation.
- USCA SNA Meetings are held monthly. Meeting dates, times and place(s) will be posted on the SNA Bulletin Board and the rolling television monitor in the nursing building lobby
- Election of officers is held annually.
- Two School of Nursing Faculty members serve as advisors.
- The current Bylaws for SNA are located on the SON website.

**A Consent to Serve Form for SON Supported Student Activities, and a Student Grade Report for Participation in SON Supported Activities may be found on the School of Nursing website under Forms.

Student Awards and Criteria

USCA School of Nursing Clinical Excellence Awards

Purpose

The purpose of the clinical excellence awards is to recognize students whose clinical performance is outstanding. Awards for clinical excellence will be given in the following nursing specialty areas: Adult Health Nursing, Maternity Nursing, Child Health Nursing, Community Health Nursing, and Psychiatric Nursing. An award for overall clinical excellence will be presented to a graduating senior chosen from among all recipients of specialty clinical excellence awards in the graduating class.

Background

Nursing is both an art and a science. Therefore, nursing practice requires a blend of the most current knowledge with an insightful and humane approach to client care (Potter & Perry, p. 9). Excellent nursing practice is also a reflection of ethical standards (Potter & Perry, p. 225).

The Essentials of Baccalaureate Education for Professional Nursing Practice (2008) describe nine essentials which are fundamental to baccalaureate nursing education. The *Essentials* note that “integration of knowledge and skills is critical to practice. ... The baccalaureate graduate demonstrates clinical reasoning within the context of patient-centered care to form the basis for nursing practice that reflects ethical values.” (AACN email, October 30, 2008).

Clinical Nursing Specialty courses are:

Adult Health (NURS 309, 310) Community Health (NURS 315)

Women’s Health (NURS 323)

Child Health (NURS 324)

Mental Health/Psychiatric (NURS 322).

Process

A.) Criteria for identifying the clinically excellent student were developed by the Student Support Committee and given to course coordinators and faculty. Each course coordinator may add to the criteria to define clinical excellence in his or her course. Additions to the criteria shall be kept on file by the Student Support Committee's Awards Chairperson.

B.) Each semester course coordinators will select award recipients and submit their names to the SON Administrative Specialist. The SON Administrative Specialist will keep the names of all specialty award recipients on file. There is no obligation to present the award each semester if a course coordinator judges that no particular student in the class displayed excellence in the clinical setting.

C.) Clinical Excellence Award recipients from Level V, VI, and VII nursing specialty courses will be announced at the end of each semester at the End-of-Semester Student Recognition Celebration (the last SNA meeting of each semester) and receive a certificate.

D.) Each semester, faculty will choose the graduating senior who will receive the **USCA SON Overall Clinical Excellence Award**. Candidates will be those seniors who have received at least one Specialty Clinical Excellence Award during the program of study. The award recipient will be announced at Pinning Ceremony and receive a plaque and a monetary award (if available).

Selection Criteria

Criteria include clinical and professional nursing behaviors.

Note: Any student with a critical incident violation is ineligible for Clinical Excellence Awards.

- i. The student shall consistently demonstrate **clinical excellence** by:
 - Role modeling clinical excellence to classmates, e.g., thorough preparation for clinical assignments.
 - Demonstrating exemplary organizational and time management skills.
 - Implementing the nursing process using critical thinking, sound judgment, and creativity (assessment, problem identification and nursing diagnosis, planning and implementing nursing care, and evaluation of client goals/outcomes)
 - Incorporating evidence based practice, clinical practice guidelines, and/or facility protocols into patient care and interactions with others.

- ii. The student shall consistently demonstrate **professional nursing behavior** by:
 - Providing family/patient-centered care while maintaining regard for cultural considerations and diversity.
 - Communicating effectively with faculty and peers.
 - Functioning as a team member.
 - Collaborating with other members of the health care team.
 - Presenting self professionally in regards to dress, appearance, and demeanor.

b. Course specific additions (optional)

Rev. 11/06/09; 03/21/10; 8/16/10; 9/16/10 and approve. Reviewed 12/14; 6/16

Outstanding Student Nurses' Association (SNA) Student Award

This award is presented to a graduating senior student who, as an official member of USCA-SNA and the National Student Nurses' Association (NSNA), has demonstrated the following:

- Outstanding transformational leadership qualities
- Outstanding service to the USCA and general community through SNA activities/projects
- Exceptional responsibility and reliability in SNA activities/project

Nursing Scholarships

The School of Nursing has several scholarships that are awarded through HAS (Honors, Awards, and Scholarship Committee). These scholarships are provided by private donors and some have specific criteria. Recommendations are made from the faculty on the Student Support Committee to HAS. All scholarships are for full-time students unless otherwise noted on the scholarship criteria. Students may apply each spring semester. The deadline is February 1, and there is a single application for these scholarships. The form for this application is available on the SON website and is submitted electronically. web.usca.edu/nursing/ (Resources/online application).

Pi Lambda Chapter Sigma Theta Tau International Leadership, Scholarship and Service Award



The mission of **Sigma Theta Tau International**, the Honor Society of Nursing, is to support the learning, knowledge, and professional development of nurses committed to make a difference in health worldwide.

Pi Lambda Chapter of STTI at the University of South Carolina Aiken embraces this mission. The chapter wishes to acknowledge and embrace new members of the chapter who have exhibited leadership, scholarship, and service to the organization, the profession, and the community.

In February 2008, **Pi Lambda Chapter** voted to give *a monetary award of \$100 to an outstanding new member of Pi Lambda*. **The recipient of this award will be from the graduating class**. The recipient will be recognized at the School of Nursing Pinning ceremony each semester. The Spring semester recipient will also be recognized at the University's Convocation ceremony.

The following are the criteria which must be met in order for an individual to be considered for the Pi Lambda Excellence in Leadership, Scholarship, and Service Award.

- * The applicant shall *be an inducted and current* member Pi Lambda chapter.
- * The applicant shall *submit a completed application*.
- * The applicant shall *ask for a letter of support from a current member of Pi Lambda* chapter.
- * The supporting member shall submit the letter of support/recommendation to the Awards Chair.

Both the application and the support letter will be considered when determining the recipient for this award.

**Deadlines for applications are
April 15 for May graduation
and November 15 for December graduation**
Applications and letters of support can be sent
to: Chair of Research and Awards

****application is on the SON website under the Pi Lambda tab.**

Technology

Computer Literacy in Nursing

The School of nursing requires that all entering students be computer literate. Students must check and respond to emails on a daily basis and be able to work online to accomplish individual and group assignments. They are also required to take standardized tests online each semester. Specific Training will be provided for students who have clinical assignments in hospitals that require online documentation.

Personal Internet Networking Sites

Please be advised that employers may check the internet for applicant internet networking sites. You are accountable for your postings. Postings that violate HIPPA regulations and therefore deemed improper by clinical agencies and/or employers may result in your dismissal from and/or failure of clinical and/or not receiving an offer of a position before or after graduation.

University Student Services

Center for Student Achievement

The Center for Student Achievement encourages the academic success of USC Aiken students by assisting them in developing educational plans, connecting them to campus resources, and promoting engaged learning and personal responsibility. Below are descriptions of some of the services in the department. The Center for Student Achievement is located in Penland, Room 108. More detailed information about these services, a full list of the free programs in the department, and other academic resources can be accessed online at web.usca.edu/csa/ and at 803-641-3297.

Academic Consultations

The Center for Student Achievement offers academic consultations designed to assist students at any level. Students work one-on-one with professional staff members to improve time management, study skills, organizational skills and other academic skills. Students can schedule an appointment using the “Appointment Request” form on the website. The Center for Student Achievement is located in Penland, Room 108; online at web.usca.edu/csa/ and at 803-641-3297.

Career Services

This office is dedicated to assisting USCA students with career-related issues, such as selecting a major, choosing a career, experiential learning and job searches. Many services available through this office, including staff assistance and computer support. The office is located in the Penland Administration Building room 107 or call 641-3440; online at web.usca.edu/career-services/
Further information regarding Career Services may be found in the *2013-2014 Undergraduate and Graduate Programs Bulletin*

Counseling Center

The Counseling Center’s mission is to support students in their individual development by maximizing their problem-solving and decision-making skills in order to facilitate constructive choices in accomplishing their academic and personal goals. In conjunction with this mission, the Counseling Center interacts with the University community to ensure a college environment that is

as beneficial as possible to the overall wellbeing of students, thereby empowering them to meet their fullest potential. The Counseling Center provides counseling services for USC Aiken undergraduate and graduate students. Services are free and confidential, unless the individual student specifically requests that information be revealed to a particular entity or the student poses a potential danger to himself/herself or others. The services offer a holistic, developmental and short-term approach to assessing, consulting, individual counseling, group counseling, psycho-education, and training which enhances students' lives. Counselors are available by calling the Counseling Center at (803) 641- 3609 for an appointment. Information on additional services is available in the Counseling Center, Business and Education Building, Room 126, or at the following web site: web.usca.edu/cc/.

Disability Services

The mission of Disability Services is to facilitate the transition of students with disabilities to the University environment and act to provide appropriate accommodations for each student's special needs in order to ensure equal access to all programs, activities and services at USCA.

Disability Services may be reached at (803) 643-6815 and is located in the Business and Education Building, Room 134. The Disability Services website is web.usca.edu/ds/index.dot

Early Warning

The Early Warning process is a mechanism to alert students to specific behaviors and academic issues that may affect their academic performance. USCA faculty and teaching staff are encouraged to submit Early Warning Forms. When an Early Warning Form is received, the student and the student's advisor are informed. Students who receive Early Warning letters are encouraged to meet with their advisor and professor for the course in which the Early Warning was received.

Math Lab

The mission of the Math Lab is to provide support for students enrolled in mathematics courses at USCA, and ultimately enable students to be successful in classes that use mathematics. This is accomplished by providing students with free peer tutoring in any freshman level and selected sophomore level mathematics classes. The Math Lab is located in Penland, Room 221; online at web.usca.edu/csa/tutoring/MathLab.dot

Tutoring

Tutoring is available in a number of content areas and courses. All USCA tutors are identified through faculty references, and tutoring is free for enrolled USCA students. To access a list of tutors available for the current semester, visit the Center for Student Achievement website. Additionally, if students need assistance in a course that is not included in the list, they can complete a "Tutor Request" form on the website: web.usca.edu/csa/tutoring/

Writing Room

The mission of the Writing Room is to provide an open teaching and learning environment for the collaborative discussion of writing so that students may become more aware and independent writers. Writing consultants come from a range of disciplines and are formally trained to provide feedback during all phases of the writing process. The Writing Room is located in H&SS, Room 112 or online at web.usca.edu/csa/tutoring/writing-room.dot