SCHOOL OF Nursing

**Traditional Track
BSN Student Handbook
2025-2026**

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Welcome from the Dean of the School of Nursing

Welcome to the School of Nursing at USCA! We are excited that you have chosen USCA to complete your BSN. We look forward to helping you achieve this goal so that you can provide quality, evidence-based care/services to individuals, families, and communities locally, nationally, and internationally.

As one of three professional schools at USCA, we pride ourselves on maintaining a caring learning environment in which you can fulfill your educational goals. School of Nursing graduates acquire valuable knowledge and skills that help them meet the ever-changing challenges in healthcare and advance within the profession.

Our nursing program is fully accredited by CCNE, the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education. A BSN degree from USCA compares with those granted by much larger universities, but with a more personalized experience. School of Nursing faculty strive to know their students by name, and the learning experience often goes far beyond the classroom.

Our award-winning faculty hold advanced terminal degrees from prestigious institutions and are active in applied and pedagogical research. Additionally, faculty integrate their clinical experience and expertise into classroom discussions/activities as a way to enhance student's critical thinking and clinical reasoning skills. Actively involved in the local community, the nursing faculty also work closely with our clinical partners to maximize your learning experience.

On behalf of the faculty and staff, welcome to the School of Nursing. We want each of you to succeed, and we are here to help you in any way that we can.

Wishing you much success,

Katie A. Chargualaf PhD, RN, CMSRN, CNE, FAMSN, FAAN
Dean, USCA School of Nursing
Wells Hanly/Bank of America Endowed Chair for Nursing

Mission

USCA School of Nursing seeks to prepare students with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to care for diverse individuals and populations across the lifespan and in various healthcare settings regionally and globally.

Vision

To empower the next generation of nurses to optimize healthcare in local, national, and global communities.

Philosophy

The faculty believe:
- Nursing, as an art and science, is a vital component of health care.
- High impact teaching practices facilitate connections between theories and principles from liberal arts and competency-based nursing education.
- Nursing practice utilizes clinical judgement and evidence-based practice to deliver safe, quality care to individuals, families, and populations, respecting the individuality of each client.
- Graduates will be prepared to practice in a rapidly changing, complex healthcare system.
- A commitment to professional development and lifelong learning is necessary to maintain nursing competence.

Core Values

- Caring
- Integrity
- Diversity
- Collaboration
- Communication
- Advocacy
- Respect
- Excellence
- Innovation
- Leadership

Program Outcomes

USCA School of Nursing prepares students for successful practice based on the 10 standards specified by the American Association of Colleges of Nursing's *The Essentials: Core Competencies for Professional Nursing Education* (2021). Graduates will demonstrate evidence of these competencies:

1. **Knowledge for Nursing Practice**
   Demonstrate clinical judgment in the delivery of competent care that is supported by a broad knowledge and theoretical base in nursing and other sciences, liberal arts, and humanities.
2. **Person-Centered Care**
   Cultivate caring relationships that respect the dignity of individuals, families, and communities through advocacy, health assessment, planning, facilitation of care, education, and evaluation of outcomes across the four spheres of care.
3. **Population Health**
   Assess and apply strategies for the health and well-being of communities through advocacy, prevention, prioritization, and mobilization of care for endemic as well as emerging health problems.
4. **Scholarship for the Nursing Discipline**
   Identify, synthesize, and apply research evidence into the design, delivery, and evaluation of evidence-based nursing care across the wellness-illness continuum.
5. **Quality and Safety**
   Participate in the identification, development, delivery, and ongoing evaluation of individual and multidisciplinary services, activities, and functions that facilitate delivery of safe, high-quality care.
6. **Interprofessional Partnerships**
   Collaborate with members of the multidisciplinary healthcare team using professional verbal and written communication to promote effective problem-solving and delivery of holistic care.
7. **Systems-Based Practice**
   Articulate the interconnectedness of nursing and the complex healthcare delivery system, emphasizing the role of the professional nurse within an organizational structure and in the provision of cost-effective, high-quality care across the wellness-illness continuum.
8. **Informatics and Healthcare Technologies**
   Utilize digital resources and technologies, and interact with telehealth platforms to deliver safe patient care and facilitate communication between patients and healthcare providers in a variety of settings.
9. **Professionalism**
   Provide nursing care that represents the professional identity of nursing, is grounded in ethical principles, and is in accordance with the scope and standards of practice for professional registered nurses.
10. **Personal, Professional, and Leadership Development**
    Demonstrate personal and professional responsibility through self-care, life-long learning, and the development of capacity for leadership.

School of Nursing: Organization

Dean of the School of Nursing
The Dean is responsible for ensuring the academic rigor and organizational integrity of the School of Nursing. In this capacity, the Dean addresses any challenges as well as anticipates and plans for the future to ensure the success of the School of Nursing students and faculty.

Associate Dean of the School of Nursing
The Associate Dean works closely with the Dean to plan, implement, and evaluate both tracks of the Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) program. This role also oversees the administrative operations of these programs to ensure they meet high standards of quality and comply with university and accreditation requirements.

Faculty of the School of Nursing (FT/PT clinical)
Faculty members of the School of Nursing are experienced nurses with expertise in a wide range of nursing roles and settings. Based on input from the South Carolina Board of Nursing, the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN), the National Council of State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN), and local healthcare agencies, the faculty designs and administers the curriculum. Individual faculty members are responsible for preparing instructional activities and assessing learning outcomes in the courses that they teach. In courses with a clinical component, the course coordinator is also responsible for ensuring that students engage in clinical experiences that will enhance classroom learning.

Faculty Mentors
When beginning the nursing program, all students are assigned a faculty mentor in the School of Nursing. In addition to serving as the academic advisor, faculty mentors also provide guidance to ensure academic and professional success. Students will meet with their advisors at least once each semester before the registration period opens for the next term. Academic advisement holds are not lifted until this meeting occurs.

Academic Advisors
- ***Pre-Nursing Students***
  Students who declare Nursing as their major receive academic advisement from a dedicated Nursing advisor through the Center for Student Achievement. This advisor will educate pre-nursing students about the prerequisite courses, grade point average, and other necessary requirements for application to the School of Nursing. To schedule an appointment with the pre-nursing academic advisor, contact the Student Success Center.
- ***Nursing Students*** *(those enrolled in the nursing program)*
  Traditional track nursing students receive academic advisement from their faculty mentors.

Admissions, Progression, and Graduation Committee (APG)
The oversight of students' admission, progression through the nursing program, and readiness for graduation falls to the APG Committee.

- ***Admission***: The Committee reviews applications in March and October each year. Admission is a competitive process. After reviewing all elements of each application, students are admitted, assigned to a waiting list, or denied admission. Students who were not admitted may reapply if they wish.
- ***Progression***: Occasionally, some students are not successful in courses or experience challenges outside of the nursing program that make progression impossible. Students unable to progress through the program in the standard 5-semester sequence may need to petition and appear before the APG Committee to remain in the nursing program. The APG Committee is responsible for determining if future success in the program is likely, based on students' previous academic performance and any actions taken to mitigate failure.
- ***Graduation***: The APG Committee, with the help of faculty mentors, ensures that students who successfully complete the nursing program meet all other requirements for graduation and are ready for endorsement for the NCLEX-RN.

Clinical Agencies

The USCA School of Nursing maintains relationships with numerous clinical agencies throughout the Central Savannah River Area. Access to these sites is a privilege. As guests, students are expected to demonstrate professional behaviors such wearing the USCA School of Nursing uniform, adhering to policies and procedures of the clinical site, providing safe care within the scope of practice, respecting the dignity of staff, patients, and families, and being a good steward of equipment and other resources.

Program of Study

Academic Advisement

Prior to admission to the traditional nursing program, all students, except for honors students who declare nursing as their major, receive academic advisement through the Center for Student Achievement. Upon admission to the traditional BSN program, students are assigned a faculty mentor who will serve as their academic advisor.

Registration for Nursing Courses

Courses in the nursing program, regardless of track, are designed to be taken in a specific sequence. For guidance, students should consult with their academic advisors and refer to the traditional program of study to determine the sequence. Students in the traditional program may not register for courses in the RN-BSN track.

Completion Time

Most students complete the nursing program in five sequential semesters or "levels" over 28 months. All courses in one level must be successfully completed before advancing to courses in the next level. A limited number of Aiken campus students who begin the traditional track in the Spring semester may be eligible to take a full semester over their first or second summer in the program so that they graduate within 24 months instead of 28 months. Students who are interested in taking a full level over the summer may submit an application to the Dean of the School of Nursing during the Spring

semester. Students at the Union and Sumter campuses complete the program in 24 months by taking the final semester of the program during the summer on their respective campuses.

Part-time Schedule
The School of Nursing does not offer a part-time option for students except under extenuating circumstances. For students needing to complete the program part-time, please refer to the School of Nursing Part-Time Schedule Policy to learn about the required course sequencing.

Academic Support
Nursing students have access to resources through the USCA Center for Student Achievement. These services include, among others, tutoring and academic advising.

To support success in the program, the School of Nursing provides additional resources for traditional track students.

School of Nursing Orientation
- **On-line self-study modules**: Students will complete a series of modules in the Blackboard learning platform prior to Orientation Day. Students admitted to the program will receive information about how to access the course with their acceptance letters.
- **Evidence-based study strategies**: Nursing students are responsible for processing and assimilating large volumes of information in a relatively short time. Courses in the program build on knowledge developed in previous courses, including prerequisite courses. Prior to starting the nursing program, many students rely primarily on memorization to be successful in their courses. To ensure successful completion of *nursing* courses, students need to expand their repertoire of learning strategies so that they can make connections between existing knowledge and new knowledge, skills, attitudes, and experiences.
- **Maximizing Microsoft Office product use**: Students enter the nursing program with a range of computer-related skills and need to expand on these skills for success in writing intensive courses, collaborative work on a single document, and to ensure access to documents from more than one device.
- **Introduction to ATI®**: Students will engage with this learning and testing platform regularly throughout their time in the program. Introduction to this platform will occur on Orientation Day.

Peer Ambassador for Student Success (PASS) Program
The PASS Program provides students with additional exposure to content in a variety of courses. Course faculty develop additional learning activities that are led by students (peer ambassadors) who are in higher levels in the nursing program. The weekly activities foster development of knowledge through alternative activities such as games, case studies, and NCLEX practice questions.

ATI® Resources
All students in the traditional program have access to Assessment Technologies Institute® (ATI) resources throughout the program and up to six months after graduation. In addition to supplemental instruction, students have access to thousands of test questions, computer-adaptive modes, and rationales that assist students to become familiar with content and NCLEX-style testing while developing critical thinking skills.

Core Performance Standards for the School of Nursing

Americans with Disabilities Act
Applicants and current students are entitled to reasonable accommodations for disabilities. According to the US Department of Justice Civil Rights Division, a disability is defined as a "physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities." Students with a physical, psychological, and/or learning disability that could influence success in the nursing program should contact the Disability Services Office to ensure access to programs, activities, and services.

In addition to academics, all students must be able to perform specific actions that are essential for entry-level professional nursing practice. The USCA School of Nursing is committed to supporting qualified applicants and students with disabilities who need reasonable accommodations to be successful in the nursing program.

Ability	Standard	Examples
Mobility	Ability to move from room to room and in small spaces	• Move between patient care areas • Move within crowded patient care environments
Motor skills	Ability to perform gross and fine motor tasks	• Deliver effective compressions and airway management (bag-valve-mask use) • Assist with patient positioning • Insert intravenous or urinary catheters • Open single-dose pill packages
Hearing	Ability to assess and monitor patient and environmental information	• Distinguish patient's physiological sounds • Hear and distinguish calls for help • Hear and differentiate between multiple patient monitor alarms
Visual	Ability to assess and monitor patient and environmental information	• Inspect patient/environment for abnormalities • Assess patient for response to therapeutic interventions
Tactile	Ability to assess and monitor patient and environmental information	• Palpate patient for abnormalities • Palpate to ascertain response to therapeutic interventions

Core Academic Standards

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

A final grade of "C+" or better is required in all nursing courses for successful completion and progression to the next level of the BSN program. Final grades will not be rounded up at the end of the semester. 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.

Assessment of Learning

Competency-Based Assessment
In accordance with the American Association of Colleges of Nursing guidance, the USCA School of Nursing prepares students so that they are "practice ready" upon graduation. The faculty deliver a scaffolded education that gradually develops competency as represented by several entrustable professional activities (EPAs) that are necessary for entry-level professional nursing. The EPAs address knowledge, skills, attitudes, and clinical judgment related to clinical and non-clinical behaviors.

Assessment Methods
Testing Environment and Procedures
To prepare students for the NCLEX-RN, all exams are administered on students' personal computer devices. Time allotted for each question is 1.5 minutes (e.g., 75 minutes/50 questions). To mimic the NCLEX-RN testing format, no backward navigation is permitted, each question must be answered before moving forward to the next, and extra credit is not awarded. At the discretion of course faculty, seating may be assigned.

Medication Calculation Proficiency Testing
To ensure safety and readiness for medication administration in the clinical environment, all students must demonstrate mastery of medication calculations in each level of the program. The required degree of accuracy in calculations is dependent on the level in which students are enrolled:

      Level 4: grade of $\geq$ 90% is required
      Levels 5 and 6: grade of $\geq$ 95% is required
      Levels 7 and 8: grade of 100% is required

Standardized Testing
Students are provided with several opportunities in each level to become more experienced with the NCLEX-RN testing format. The USCA School of Nursing utilizes

Assessment Technologies Institute® (ATI) products to develop students' familiarity with the testing format and breadth of knowledge required. Results from these exams are nationally normed and assist students and faculty to gauge the likelihood of success on the NCLEX-RN. Scores on these exams contribute to the final grade in associated courses.

Clinical Grades

The development of clinical competencies occurs over time with consistent exposure to the complexities of pathophysiology and experiences in the clinical setting. Students are expected to develop competencies gradually over the 5-semester program. Inability to show progression with development of these competencies will result in failure of the entire course (both clinical and classroom elements). When students do not successfully complete one or more courses in an individual level, they are not eligible to progress to the next level in the nursing program. 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.

Clinical Experiences

Clinical Placement

The School of Nursing is fortunate to have affiliations with a wide variety of clinical sites. Students on the Aiken campus have clinical experience in the Central Savannah River Area and as far north as Lexington. Students attending the Union and Sumter campuses have clinicals in their respective regions. Because these sites are scattered across a large geographical area, students must have access to reliable personal transportation.

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 all clinical areas, including the simulation lab. Please consult the School of Nursing Dress Code Policy for more detailed information.

Clinical Experience Attendance

Clinical experiences contribute to the development of necessary competencies for nursing practice. The South Carolina Board of Nursing requires students to engage in a minimum number of hours in clinical settings to be eligible for licensure. Therefore, attendance at all assigned clinical experiences (e.g., direct patient care, observation, and simulation) is obligatory for successful completion of courses requiring clinical experiences.

Environmental Risks Associated with Patient Care

The School of Nursing provides evidence-based, comprehensive education regarding personal safety to prevent exposure to bloodborne pathogens. In accordance with recommendations from the American Association of Colleges of Nursing:
1. All students must receive vaccination against hepatitis B virus (HBV).

2. All students receive education to minimize risk of exposure to HBV and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) to include, but not limited to
   a. Universal precautions
   b. Personal protective equipment use
   c. Safe handling of needles
   d. Safe handling of contaminated equipment

In addition to bloodborne pathogens, students will encounter other pathogens in patient care environments. Students may not refuse to provide care for patients because of fear of exposure to any infectious diseases if they have received appropriate education and personal protective equipment is available. In some circumstances, individuals with documented immunocompromise may be reassigned to care for other patients.

Equipment and supplies, combined with actions of patients, may increase the risks for physical injury. Prior to beginning clinical experiences, all nursing students receive education in body mechanics and safe patient handling techniques that can be used to mitigate these risks.

Students who experience exposure to bloodborne pathogens or physical injuries should immediately refer to the Bloodborne Pathogen Exposure Prevention and Exposure Incident and/or the Accidental Injury policy.

Inappropriate Student Assignments
Clinical faculty often create assignments for students to ensure exposure to a wide variety of clinical conditions and patient acuities. Potentially, a student could be assigned to care for a patient with whom the student is acquainted. In these situations, the student should notify the clinical faculty and request an alternative assignment.

In some cases, students may be assigned to care for patients that would require students to wear N-95 respirators. Students should notify the clinical faculty if fit testing for the N-95 mask has not been completed and request an alternative assignment.

In the event of pregnancy, students should avoid caring for patients with certain conditions and those who have radioactive implants or were injected recently with a radioactive isotope. Students are responsible for notifying the clinical faculty of pregnancy so that appropriate patient care assignments can be made.

Scope of Practice
Licensed practical/vocational nurses entering the program already have some basic nursing skills. These students are advised to practice within the scope of practice for a professional nursing student rather than as a licensed practical nurse when in the clinical setting. For example, these students should not administer medications without the direct supervision of their clinical faculty.

Universal Clinical Agency Requirements

In addition to knowledge, faculty and clinical agencies need documentation related to the general safety of students, staff, patients, and visitors at clinical sites. Based on assessment of these documents, clinical agencies reserve the right to deny students opportunities for clinical experiences.

Health Requirements and Annual Updates
Nursing students are required to meet all health requirements described in the USCA Bulletin. When students enter the nursing program, they are required to comply with all health requirements established by affiliated clinical agencies. Students are responsible for maintaining all documentation necessary to demonstrate compliance with affiliated clinical agencies' requirements. For more information, see the policy on health requirements and annual updates.

Healthcare Provider Basic Life Support (BLS) Certification: All clinical agencies require students to maintain Healthcare Provider BLS certification from the American Heart Association. Students are responsible for maintaining this certification throughout their time in the nursing program. For more information, please see the associated policy.

Criminal Background Check
All students are required to submit to a criminal background check prior to beginning the program and annually thereafter. Please refer to the Criminal Background Check policy.

Annual Drug Screening
The USCA School of Nursing adheres to strict standards of professional conduct mandated by the South Carolina Board of Nursing and by those required of area healthcare agencies. To ensure patient safety and maintain the trust of the public, the USCA School of Nursing requires all students to submit to annual drug screening tests. The cost of the drug screening is covered by University fees. Screening must be completed before starting the nursing program and annually until all clinical coursework is done. Students are responsible for making any appointments necessary to complete the drug screening. Please consult the School of Nursing Drug and Alcohol Policy and the USCA Use of Alcohol and Use of Drugs policies.

Attendance

Class Attendance
To benefit from learning activities provided by faculty and guest speakers, students are expected to attend all classes. Students should be settled in the classroom before the class starts to avoid disrupting the class.

Students are adult learners, meaning they can make decisions about their education and are accountable for their outcomes. Occasionally, students have unavoidable personal business to address during scheduled class periods. Similarly, when students are dealing with an illness (especially one that could be contagious), students are encouraged to remain off campus. In these situations, students are responsible for

obtaining any missed information from classmates after the absence. Students unable to attend class may want to notify the instructor in advance of the class.

Electronic Devices
Students and faculty alike engage with electronic devices throughout the day for a variety of reasons. To maintain classroom settings that are conducive learning environments for all students, electronic devices are to be used only for scholarly activities. Examples of both acceptable and unacceptable activities include, but are not limited to:

Acceptable Activities	Unacceptable Activities
Completing internet searches as part of class activities	Making video recordings of class or clinical activities
Accessing Lippincott Advisor app on phone	Engaging in verbal telephone conversations
Working within cloud-based sharing sites	Conducting internet shopping activities
Accessing e-textbooks for reference	Viewing social media
Taking notes during lectures	Texting during non-emergency situation
Making audio recordings of lectures or presentations	Making personal phone calls in patient care settings

Students should silence all devices designed to receive incoming phone calls during class periods. Initiating and receiving voice calls during class periods is prohibited. In the event notification of a personal emergency or crisis, students should leave the room without disrupting class activities.

Occasionally, accommodations authorized by the Disability Services Office may permit students to wear headphones to provide white noise during exams. Students who have received this accommodation are required to provide notice of this accommodation from the Disability Services Office and present devices for inspection as requested.

Scheduled Exam Attendance
Students are obligated to take the exam on the date and time scheduled. In the event of *documented* incapacity, the exam may be rescheduled at the discretion of course faculty. In these situations, students are required to notify the course faculty *prior to* the start of the exam, provide supporting evidence or documentation for the cause of incapacity (e.g., doctor's excuse, funeral program) and, if the absence is excused, reschedule to take the exam within two days of the returning to class. Failure to do so will result in a zero for the missed exam.

Summer Courses
The School of Nursing offers limited courses in the summer, depending on the number of faculty available to teach courses and the number of students interested in taking them. At least 8 students must enroll in clinical courses and 10 in non-clinical courses or the courses will not be offered. Courses offered in the summer included the two non-clinical courses in Level 6, and all courses in Level 5 and Level 7. Registration for the Level 6 courses is on a first-come, first-served basis. For the Level 5 and Level 7 courses, the process is different.

In the Spring semester, interested students apply to complete Level 5 or Level 7 during the upcoming Summer term. The Dean of the School of Nursing reviews the applications, consulting with faculty. Military students who must complete their coursework within two years receive priority over other students. Summer courses are not intended for students who were not successful in or withdrew from a course. At the Dean's discretion, exceptions may be made only if space is available or for extenuating circumstances.

Students selected to take Level 5 or Level 7 courses in the summer must take the full complement of courses for that level. These students need to be aware that the Summer semester is shorter than Fall and Spring semesters and that delivery of content is more condensed as a result.

Progression and Retention

To ensure that students maintain clinical skills and are successful on the NCLEX-RN, the School of Nursing requires completion of the program in no more than 3.5 years or 42 months (normal is 2.5 years). Students who are not successful in or who drop courses are at risk of not completing the program within the acceptable timeframe. Students who are not successful on the initial attempt to complete a course or to earn a passing final grade (C+/80%) should consult the Progression and Retention Policy of the School of Nursing for how to proceed and to learn more about stipulations concerning withdrawals and failures. Student records are regularly audited by School of Nursing staff and faculty. Students are encouraged to meet with faculty mentors and the Financial Aid counselor when considering withdrawal from courses to ensure understanding of the repercussions of withdrawals.

Students in good standing in the nursing program may take a 1-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), returning students must demonstrate maintenance of knowledge and skills equivalent to the level achieved in the last-attended semester. Please refer to the Progression and Retention Policy for more information.

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity, defined as respect for one's own work and the work of others, is the guiding principle for all aspects of the educational process. All USCA students are expected to conform to the Academic Code of Conduct for all assignments, exams, and any other academic work awarded a score or grade. All nursing students are expected to read and electronically sign the Academic Code of Conduct upon entry into the School of Nursing. Nursing students who violate the Academic Code of Conduct will be subject to consequences such as failing grades for associated assignments, exams, or courses, and possibly dismissal from the nursing program. Nursing students who witness or become aware of violations are expected to report these to the associated course faculty and/or the Dean of the School of Nursing.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism, the use of another's intellectual property, ideas, and words without attribution, is a form of violation of the Academic Code of Conduct. In accordance with the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (7th ed.), appropriate attribution and style is required for assignments in all courses.

Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) Use

Students in the School of Nursing regularly examine complex aspects of nursing care using evidence obtained from a variety of sources. The synthesis of evidence and development of solutions or ideas is challenging, requiring students to rely on course resources and professional literature or websites, all of which are acceptable practices when proper attribution is provided. The subsequent output of student work allows students and faculty alike to assess mastery of concepts.

When students use generative artificial intelligence (AI) to synthesize information, they misrepresent their mastery of material and concepts. Due to the nature of generative AI, some information provided may be incorrect or lack context. Generative AI typically does not provide sources or in-text citations or, when sources are identified, they are not legitimate. For that reason, students should exercise extreme caution when using generative AI. **Inappropriate use of this technology will be treated as a violation of the Academic Code of Conduct.** If generative AI is used, students are required to provide appropriate attribution for any content derived from AI.

Though not exhaustive, examples of appropriate and inappropriate use of generative AI are provided below:

Appropriate Use	Inappropriate Use
Using Chat GPT for step-by-step instructions to solve a math problem	Using Leo to re-write a classmate's paper so it can be submitted by another student
Using OpenAI to get an overview of a topic	Using Bard to generate three solutions to a patient care problem, then copying Bard's output into a student assignment without appropriate attribution
Using Synthesia to make an email to a professor sound more professional	Using Gemini to compare and contrast two ideas with output generated at a college reading level for use in a paper for a writing intensive course

Technology

The delivery of healthcare is facilitated by technology used for patient monitoring, diagnostic procedures, information management systems, and many other purposes.

Because of this, the curriculum is designed to develop information literacy and computer skills necessary for professional practice. Students should anticipate using their laptop computers and other connected devices for assignments, collaborative activities, data collection and processing, and information management. In the clinical setting, students will engage with a wide range of devices and processes, including telehealth platforms, consumer wearable devices, patient monitoring devices, secure healthcare information technologies, and much more.

Communication

All electronic communication originating from the School of Nursing and its faculty will be through USCA-approved channels. These include USCA email, Blackboard, and USCA websites. Nursing students are responsible for checking USCA email and Blackboard daily.

To develop skill with written professional communication, nursing students are to follow several guidelines when using email to communicate with School of Nursing faculty and staff. Please address the recipient by title (e.g., Dr. or Prof., Mrs. or Ms.). In the email's body, do not write as if composing a phone text message.

Students may find that use of a standardized email signature is helpful to recipients. The recommended contents of the signature include the full name of the student, VIP number, and level in the nursing program. Students in leadership positions with student organizations may want to include their role in the email signature.

Social Media Use

Social media are web-based 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., X, Telegram), content communities (e.g., YouTube), social networking sites (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, Reddit), and virtual gaming or community sites. 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.

Social media are effective tools for communicating with family, friends, and others with shared interests. To illustrate, the School of Nursing maintains Instagram and Facebook pages to showcase the many aspects of the nursing program, its faculty, and the students; however, the School of Nursing's social media accounts do not identify clinical sites, patients, or reveal sensitive or confidential information.

Before entering the nursing program, many students likely maintained personal social media accounts, posting content that, in some cases, may contain sensitive information or images. Nursing students are advised to post content and images that show more

professional/mature ideas and behaviors. Many future employers review the social media accounts of prospective hires to identify individuals who they perceive as lacking moral character or sound judgment. For more information about expected behaviors related to social media use, please visit the National Council of State Boards of Nursing refer to the Social Media Policy.

To maintain faculty objectivity, nursing students are advised to avoid requesting or accepting requests to "follow" or "friend" nursing faculty during their time in the nursing program.

Student Organizations

Two student organizations are active in the School of Nursing.

Student Nurses Governance (SNG)
The purpose of the SNG is to:
- Create a sense of community among nursing students.
- Coordinate the peer mentor program for incoming nursing students.
- Facilitate communication between students, faculty, and the USCA Student Government Association.
- Identify student concerns and advocate for resolution of these within the School of Nursing or at a University level if necessary.
- Develop and coordinate activities to support morale.

Representatives are elected by each level, and leadership positions are also by election. For more information, see the bylaws on the School of Nursing website.

South Carolina Student Nurses Association (SNA)
The USCA chapter of the SC SNA is a pre-professional organization that exists to:
- Provide learning opportunities related to the profession of nursing.
- Engage in service activities that benefit the School of Nursing or the wider community.
- Develop opportunities for students to engage with a broader network of nursing students at the state and national levels.

The SNA meets monthly. The chapter is led by elected officials, and students in all levels in the nursing program are encouraged to participate as either a member or as part of the leadership team. For more information, see the bylaws on the School of Nursing website.

Representation on School of Nursing Committees
Student representatives are members of the faculty-led School of Nursing Student Support Committee and Curriculum Committee. Students who agree to serve on these committees have voting privileges in most situations. If interested in serving on one of these committees, students should contact their faculty mentor.

Student Honors, Awards, and Scholarships

Clinical Excellence Awards

Clinical excellence awards recognize outstanding clinical performance by students in any clinical course in levels 5 – 7. The awards are presented at the end of each semester. In addition, a graduating senior is selected from any recipients of clinical excellence awards in that cohort to receive the overall clinical excellence award. This award is announced during the Pinning Ceremony on the day of graduation. For more information about how awardees are selected, please visit the School of Nursing website.

Scholarships

The School of Nursing is fortunate to have many benefactors that support student learning financially. Many of the scholarships have stipulations or criteria about eligibility. Scholarships are awarded by the School of Nursing Student Support Committee based on input from the USCA Office of Financial Aid, USCA Advancement Office, School of Nursing faculty members, and in some cases, the students themselves. All scholarships are designated for full-time nursing students unless otherwise noted on the scholarship criteria. Students may apply by completing a single online application form by February 1st each year.

In addition to these scholarships, the Pi Lambda Chapter of Sigma Theta Tau International offers a Leadership, Scholarship, and Service award each semester to a Pi Lambda member in the graduating class. Interested, eligible students should send completed applications to the Pi Lambda Chair of Research and Awards by April 15th (May graduation) or November 15th (December graduation).

Professional Expectations

Students, across a variety of settings, need to maintain conduct that supports teaching, learning, and the public's trust. In the event of behaviors that are unbecoming of a professional nurse, students will experience consequences appropriate for the situation. These can include removal from the classroom or clinical setting and/or formal contracts. Contracts define the behaviors that must be avoided to prevent failure of the course or dismissal from the program. The duration that the contract is in effect can range from the remainder of the semester to the duration of the time in the nursing program.

Examples of unacceptable professional behaviors include repeated tardiness, recurrent disruptions of class, ongoing violations of the uniform policy, and inappropriate and/or disruptive interactions with faculty, peers, patients, and healthcare staff.

Critical Incidents

Critical incidents are events resulting from behaviors that are unprofessional, compromise patient safety, demonstrate lack of integrity, and/or violate the American Nurses Association Code of Ethics. These incidents, because of the egregious nature of

the behavior, will result in failure to pass the course(s) in which they are associated and could result in dismissal from the nursing program. Please consult the School of Nursing Critical Incidents policy for more information.

Student Grievances and Appeals

Students who are facing dismissal from the program or wish to challenge decisions affecting standing in the program may appeal to the School of Nursing Admissions, Progression, and Graduation Committee. Please refer to the School of Nursing Appeals Process or the Grievance Process Policy for how to initiate the appeals process.

Application for Licensure as a Professional Nurse

Prior to completing the last semester of study, students are expected to apply for the to take the National Council of Schools of Nursing licensing examination (NCLEX-RN) and apply for licensure in the jurisdiction where they will reside after graduation.

As part of the application for licensure, all applicants are required to submit to a criminal background check. Conviction of a crime other than a minor traffic violation could result in ineligibility for nursing licensure. Students who have been convicted of a crime should notify the state board of nursing to learn how this could affect eligibility to apply for licensure.

For South Carolina applicants: https://www.llr.sc.gov/nurse/
For Georgia applicants: https://sos.ga.gov/georgia-board-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