Merritt College
Associate Degree Nursing Program

Student Handbook

2026-2027

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LETTER FROM PROGRAM DIRECTOR:

WELCOME STUDENTS!

Welcome to the Merritt College Associate Degree Nursing (ADN) Program! Established in 1961, the ADN Program has a long tradition of preparing competent and compassionate nurses to serve our diverse community. Since 1978, we have continued to grow and evolve to meet advances in health care, changing educational standards, regulatory requirements, and the evolving needs of the communities we serve. Since its founding, the program has expanded significantly in scope, impact, and outreach at the local, regional, national, and global levels.

As a student in the ADN Program, you are invited to become part of a collaborative and supportive learning community dedicated to academic excellence, compassionate nursing practice, and professional growth.

Faculty and staff are committed to fostering a student-centered learning environment that recognizes the diverse experiences, strengths, and learning styles of each student. Through our “Students First” philosophy and evidence-based Strategies for Success approach, we strive to support students in overcoming challenges and achieving their academic, personal, and professional goals.

Our focus is to provide a high-quality nursing education that prepares graduates to become knowledgeable, competent, and successful registered nurses. We encourage you to actively engage with our dedicated, caring, and responsive faculty and staff who contribute to the strong tradition of student achievement and success within the ADN Program.

Sincerely,



Diane Breckenridge, PhD, MSN,
RN, ANEF, FAAN
Nursing Program Director
Merritt College

INTRODUCTION TO MERRITT COLLEGE

Merritt College is a public two-year college and one of four institutions, along with Laney College, Berkeley City College, and College of Alameda, within the Peralta Community College District in Alameda County. The College offers courses and comprehensive programs that support transfer to four-year institutions, as well as career technical and occupational pathways. Merritt College is committed to meeting the educational needs of its diverse student population and the community it serves. Situated on a 125-acre campus in the hills of southeastern Oakland, the College features modern, spacious facilities and panoramic views of the San Francisco Bay Area.

Merritt College has a longstanding and meaningful commitment to social justice, equity, and inclusion. An important part of its identity includes being the birthplace and home of the Black Panther Party. The College continues to build upon this legacy and is proud of its progress in serving students and the broader community.

MISSION STATEMENT

Merritt College puts students first. Through our rich educational programs, we foster a culture of equity and inclusion that empowers students to achieve their greatest potential and make meaningful contributions to their respective communities and our global society.

VISION

Merritt inspires students to create meaningful lives including fulfilling careers, community participation, self-expression, and a love of learning.

COMMITMENT TO EQUITY

Believing that it is our obligation to our students to confront societal racism and discrimination, we commit to the intentional and relentless application of equity and social justice as we cultivate academic excellence, self-determination, and informed civic engagement.

CORE VALUES

- **Student Access and Success** – We provide rigorous and engaging in-person and remote learning experiences that support the academic and personal achievements of our students, as well as advances in retention, persistence, and completion.
- **Equity –** We commit to supporting all students with the instruction, guidance, and resources that they need to achieve their educational goals.
- **Inclusion** – We encourage every member of the campus community to adopt our shared commitment to providing exceptional learning experiences, and to contribute to the ongoing success of the College through participatory governance.
- **Diversity** – We honor and respect the broad spectrum of backgrounds, experiences, languages, values, and cultures reflected by our campus community.

- **Social Justice** – We strive to create a student-centered learning environment that supports equal opportunity and systemic change.

MERRITT COLLEGE ASSOCIATE DEGREE NURSING PROGRAM: GENERAL INFORMATION

The Merritt College Associate of Science (AS) in Nursing degree, also known as the Associate Degree Nursing (ADN) Program, is approved by the California Board of Registered Nursing (CA BRN) and designed to prepare students for entry-level registered nursing practice. Upon successful completion of the ADN Program, graduates are eligible to take the National Council Licensure Examination for Registered Nurses (NCLEX-RN). Upon passing the examination, graduates will become licensed as registered nurses.

The ADN Program is completed on-site and is a minimum of two years (four semesters). The program is delivered using a cohort model, with students progressing through the curriculum together in a prescribed sequence of courses approved by the CA BRN and outlined in the *Total Curriculum Plan.* The course of study includes instruction in applied nursing sciences, related natural and social/behavioral sciences, and clinical nursing experience in hospitals and healthcare facilities located in the San Francisco Bay Area.

The ADN Program is institutionally accredited by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC), a division of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC). The program is also approved by the California Department of Education and the United States Department of Veterans Affairs for the training of veterans. It is authorized under the Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) for the education of eligible international students. Courses within the ADN Program are accepted for transfer by campuses within the University of California and California State University systems, as well as many other public and private institutions of higher education.

The ADN Program is housed within the Math, Science, Technology, and Allied Health Division. Other programs within this division include Health Professions and Occupations (HLTOC), Medical Assisting (MEDAS), Nutrition and Dietetics (NUTR), Radiologic Science (RADSCI), Biology (BIOL), Chemistry (CHEM), Bioscience (BIOSC), Genomics, Histotechnology, and Microscopy. The ADN Program is staffed by four full-time faculty members, in addition to a Director and Assistant Director. Adjunct faculty support both theory and clinical instruction on an as-needed basis. The Allied Health Department is further supported by one full-time Allied Health Staff Assistant, who assists with overall departmental administration, and one full-time Program Specialist dedicated specifically to supporting the ADN Program.

The ADN Program is currently approved by the CA BRN to admit a cohort of approximately 40 students each Fall through its annual admissions process. In previous years, cohort sizes were smaller due to COVID-19 impacts and program-related constraints.

HISTORY OF THE ADN PROGRAM

The ADN Program at Merritt College traces its origins to 1961, when the first cohort of 36 nursing students was admitted at Oakland City College, the predecessor institution to Merritt College. The program was established through funding from the Kellogg Foundation and with support from the California State Department of Education to help address the growing need for professional nurses in California. This milestone marked the beginning of a longstanding tradition of nursing education at the College. From its inception, the program was intentionally structured to integrate professional nursing preparation within the community college system, expanding access to nursing education for the local community while maintaining rigorous academic and clinical standards.

Since 1978, the ADN Program has undergone continuous development to address evolving health care practices, educational standards, regulatory requirements, and the needs of the communities it serves. It has maintained approval by the CA BRN and continues to prepare graduates for eligibility to take the NCLEX-RN. With more than six decades of history, the program remains committed to academic excellence, clinical competence, and service to diverse communities throughout the San Francisco Bay Area and beyond.

PROGRAM STATEMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

The ADN Program is grounded in a holistic, systems-based approach to nursing education that prepares graduates to provide safe, patient-centered care across the lifespan within diverse and dynamic health care environments.

The ADN Program is conceptually anchored in the Neuman Systems Model, which views individuals, families, and communities as open systems in constant interaction with internal and external environmental stressors. The Total Assessment Approach asks the person for their major problem area, and the physiological, psychological, sociocultural, developmental, and spiritual aspects are assessed. Nursing practice is framed through the application of primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention strategies to promote stability, reduce risk, and support optimal system functioning.

Building upon this system's perspective, the ADN Program integrates the Roy Adaptation Model, emphasizing the nurse's role in facilitating adaptive responses in the physiological, self-concept, role function, and interdependence modes. Students are prepared to apply clinical judgment and evidence-based interventions to promote adaptation and enhance health outcomes across varied clinical contexts.

The program philosophy is further enriched by Watson's Theory of Human Caring, which underscores the centrality of caring, compassion, and human connection in nursing practice. The ADN Program fosters the development of therapeutic relationships, cultural humility, and holistic care, recognizing the dignity and inherent worth of every individual.

Consistent with these theoretical nursing foundations, the ADN Program emphasizes:

- Person-centered care that respects diversity, equity, and inclusion
- Clinical judgment and critical thinking grounded in the nursing process
- Evidence-based practice to ensure quality and safety of patient care
- Professional identity formation rooted in ethical principles, accountability, and lifelong learning
- Collaboration and communication within interprofessional healthcare teams

Through the integration of didactic instruction, skills laboratory practice, patient simulation experiences, and direct patient care experiences, students develop the knowledge, skills, and behaviors necessary to function as competent entry-level registered nurses. Graduates of the program are prepared to deliver safe, effective, and compassionate care while responding to the evolving needs of individuals, families, and communities.

THINKING LIKE A NURSE

The ADN Program is intentionally designed to foster the development of students who think like nurses by integrating knowledge, skills, and clinical judgment in a continuous and meaningful way across all learning environments. The program recognizes that becoming a nurse is not achieved through isolated learning experiences, but through the consistent application of thinking processes that connect classroom knowledge to skills and simulation laboratory experience to real-world patient care.

Learning begins in the classroom, where students build the cognitive foundation necessary for clinical reasoning. Here, students are introduced to key nursing concepts and learn to identify the most relevant aspects in patient care situations. They develop the ability to recognize important clinical cues, interpret patient data, and begin forming clinical judgments that guide decision-making.

This foundation is then carried into the skills laboratory and simulation environment, where students actively apply their knowledge. In these settings, students practice fundamental nursing skills through structured, scenario-based experiences that reflect real clinical situations. They begin to think through patient care deliberately, recognizing cues, analyzing information, prioritizing needs, implementing interventions, and evaluating outcomes, all within a safe environment that supports learning and growth.

Students then transition into clinical settings, where they apply their developing knowledge and skills to the care of actual patients under faculty guidance. In these environments, learning becomes dynamic and unpredictable, requiring students to adapt to changing patient conditions, communicate effectively with patients and healthcare teams, and make sound clinical decisions in real time. Clinical experiences reinforce the importance of patient safety, accountability, and professional behavior while enhancing students' critical thinking and clinical judgment in the practice setting.

Throughout the program, students repeatedly move through this cycle of learning, practicing, and applying. This iterative process strengthens their ability to connect theory to practice, promotes consistency in clinical judgment, and builds the confidence necessary to function in complex health care environments.

By the end of the program, graduates are prepared to think critically, prioritize effectively, and deliver safe, person-centered care. They are equipped not only with the knowledge and technical skills required of an entry-level registered nurse, but with the clinical reasoning abilities necessary to respond to the evolving needs of individuals, families, and communities.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The purpose of the ADN Program is to prepare graduates to function as safe, competent, and compassionate entry-level professional nurses who provide high-quality care to diverse populations across the lifespan. The ADN Program is guided by the Merritt College Mission Statement and ADN Program Statement of Philosophy and is committed to educating nurses who serve the community in accordance with the program's philosophy and objectives.

The ADN Program utilizes an integrated curriculum that combines nursing theory, evidence-based practice, and supervised clinical learning experiences to prepare graduates to demonstrate clinical judgement, professional accountability, therapeutic communication, and patient advocacy in their service to the community as professional nurses. Upon completion of the program, graduates are prepared to meet the requirements for licensure as registered nurses and to contribute to the health and wellness of the communities they serve.

PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon successful completion of this program, students will be able to:

- Integrate professional and theoretical concepts of nursing theories into evidence-based nursing practice, including application of the Neuman Systems Model, Roy Adaptation Model, and Watson’s Theory of Human Caring while collaborating effectively with the healthcare team in the care of patients, families, and communities.
- Provide safe, competent, and patient-centered nursing care to diverse patients, families, and communities across the lifespan.
- Demonstrate proficiency in the nursing process as a systematic method for clinical decision-making, thereby enhancing effectiveness as a contributing member of the healthcare team.
- Develop professional self-awareness and reflective practice, engaging in ongoing evaluation of personal strengths, growth areas, values, motivations, and attitudes as both an individual and professional nurse.

PROGRAM GOALS

The goals of the ADN Program are to:

- Maintain and continuously evaluate a current and comprehensive nursing program that is fully aligned with the rules and regulations of the CA BRN, applicable California Education Code provisions, ADN Program policies, and Peralta Community College District policies.
- Prepare graduates for safe entry-level registered nursing practice by providing an educational program grounded in professional standards, evidence-based practice, and established nursing theory. The program equips students with the knowledge, clinical judgment, professional behaviors, and technical skills to deliver safe, competent, compassionate, holistic, culturally responsive, and patient-centered care to diverse patients, families, and communities across the lifespan in a variety of health care settings.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

To fulfill its mission and program goals, the ADN Program will:

- Establish, implement, and periodically evaluate the program philosophy and objectives to ensure relevance, regulatory compliance, and alignment with current professional nursing standards and community needs.
- Plan, implement, evaluate, and revise the program curriculum through the Total Program Evaluation Plan to ensure consistency with the program philosophy, student learning outcomes, evidence-based practice standards, and all applicable CA BRN requirements.
- Revise, implement, and systematically monitor the program policies and procedures in accordance with the ADN Program's Total Program Evaluation Plan to ensure ongoing compliance, effectiveness, and continuous quality improvement.
- Annually review and revise admission, progression, transfer, and challenge examination policies to ensure effectiveness, equity, and compliance with the CA BRN regulations, California Education Code, and District policies.
- Participate in institutional budget planning processes to ensure adequate fiscal, instructional, technological, and clinical resources, including eBooks/textbooks, online educational platforms, laboratory supplies, simulation equipment, and other instructional materials necessary to support student achievement of program outcomes.
- Participate in the recruitment, interview, and recommendation of qualified nursing faculty consistent with CA BRN-faculty qualification requirements and District hiring policies.

- Maintain ongoing and documented communication among faculty, staff, students, and college administration, including in-person and remote modalities as appropriate, to support effective program governance, collaborative decision-making, and timely implementation of program operations.

PROGRAM LEVEL OBJECTIVES

END OF FIRST YEAR

Upon **completion of the first year** of the ADN Program, students will be able to:

- Apply the nursing process in the provision of safe, evidence-based patient care, integrating established nursing theoretical frameworks and foundational sciences to support patients' adaptation to physiological, psychological, sociocultural, developmental, and spiritual stressors.
- Demonstrate effective, professional, and therapeutic communication with patients, families, and healthcare team members, including appropriate client advocacy, consistent with legal, ethical, and professional standards of nursing practice.
- Develop and implement nursing care plans and patient teaching plans, with instructor guidance, which promote patient safety, clinical stability, positive adaptive responses, and resilience across the lifespan.
- Exhibit professional behaviors and reflective practice that demonstrate personal accountability, self-awareness, and commitment to growth necessary for safe and competent nursing practice.
- Incorporate principles of lifespan development and cultural competence in the application of the nursing process, demonstrating understanding of diverse societies, cultures, and subgroups, with particular emphasis on the care of the older adult.

END OF PROGRAM (SECOND-YEAR COMPLETION)

Upon **completion of the ADN Program**, graduates will be able to:

- Provide safe, evidence-based, and patient-centered nursing care to diverse patients, families, and communities across the lifespan, independently applying the nursing process, clinical judgment, and established nursing theoretical frameworks in a variety of health care settings.
- Demonstrate advanced clinical reasoning and sound decision-making in the prioritization, planning, implementation, and evaluation of nursing care, including management of patients with complex and multisystem health conditions.
- Communicate effectively and collaboratively within the healthcare team, exhibiting leadership behaviors and patient advocacy consistent with legal, ethical, and professional standards.
- Integrate principles of patient safety, risk reduction, and quality improvement into clinical nursing practice to minimize error and promote optimal patient outcomes.

- ❖ Provide culturally responsive and developmentally appropriate nursing care, demonstrating sensitivity to diverse populations and addressing the social determinants of health that influence patient well-being.
- ❖ Demonstrate accountability, professional identity formation, and commitment to lifelong learning, including adherence to scope of practice, standards of care, and ongoing professional development as an entry-level registered nurse.

NURSING FACULTY, ADMINISTRATOR, AND STAFF

The nursing faculty of the ADN Program are committed to supporting student success and program completion. Students who experience concerns or difficulties that may interfere with learning or academic or clinical performance are encouraged to communicate directly with faculty. Faculty can assist in identifying barriers to learning, reviewing student performance, recommending strategies for improvement, and referring students to appropriate support services or remediation resources when needed.

Faculty maintain published office hours and are also available by appointment. Students are expected to communicate with faculty through Peralta email and may communicate through other methods (e.g., phone or text message) at the discretion of the faculty member.

Full-Time Faculty	Position
Diane Breckenridge, PhD, MSN, BSN, RN, ANEF, FAAN	Program Director
Iona Henderson, MSN, BSN, RN	Program Assistant Director & Instructor
Diana Barrios, MSN, BA, RN	Instructor
Monica Mofidi, DNP, MSN, BSN, RN	Instructor
Anh Nguyen, MSN, BSN, RN	Instructor
Gary Cheshire, MSN(c), MBA, BSN, RN	Instructor
Part-Time Faculty	
Raufat Ikharo, MSN, BSN, RN	Clinical Instructor
Tracy Perron, BSN, RN	Clinical Instructor
Randy Shields, MSN, BSN, RN	Instructor
Elena Todorova, DNP, MSN, BSN	Instructor
Division Administrator	
Diane Chang, MS	Interim Dean of Math, Science, Technology, and Allied Health
Division and Program Staff	
Waaduda Karim	Allied Health Staff Assistant
Amecia Young	Program Assistant

ADN PROGRAM GENERAL STUDENT REQUIREMENTS

California law requires that all community college students pay applicable enrollment fees unless exempted under specific provisions of State law. The student is responsible for purchasing required eBooks or textbooks, a designated nursing student uniform, shoes, lab coat, stethoscope, watch, and additional learning materials and equipment needed to support theory and clinical assignments. In addition, the student must cover any expenses related to physical examinations, background checks, drug screenings, health screenings, immunizations, lab work, and certifications required to obtain clearance at clinical agencies.

MERRITT ADN PROGRAM HEALTH DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS

All students admitted to the ADN Program are required to submit health and compliance documentation through CastleBranch by August 17, 2026, unless otherwise specified. Required documentation includes a health history and physical examination, color vision screening, immunizations, laboratory testing with titers, health and equipment screenings, and specified certifications. Students will receive a CastleBranch purchase code in their *Merritt College ADN Program Acceptance Letter*, which is required to create their CastleBranch account. All records are collected, reviewed, and maintained confidentially within this secure online compliance management system. These health and compliance documentation requirements are established to promote safety and uphold the professional and ethical responsibility to protect the health and well-being of students, faculty, patients, nurses, and members of the healthcare team. Students may also be required to complete additional facility-specific documentation, learning modules, screenings, or certifications as mandated by affiliated clinical agencies.

Students are responsible for maintaining current and compliant health and certification documentation throughout the duration of the program and for meeting all submission deadlines established by the ADN Program, faculty, and clinical agencies. Clinical agency requirements are subject to change based on recommendations or mandates from healthcare facilities; the California Department of Health Care Services (DHCS); the California Department of Public Health (CDPH); The Joint Commission; the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC); other local, state, or federal agencies; clinical agency risk management and infection control departments; and/or Peralta Community College District Risk Management. Students are responsible for complying with all updated requirements.

Once clinical rotations begin at hospitals or other clinical agencies, student documentation is generally due four to eight weeks prior to the assigned clinical laboratory practice experience and must be submitted into My Clinical Exchange or other designated online systems, as directed by faculty. Students will not be permitted to participate in clinical experiences until all required documentation has been completed and approved, and clinical clearance has been granted. Students will be notified of their clinical clearance

status via email by the course instructor. After submitting required documentation, students should not contact the clinical agency directly regarding clearance status inquiries.

Failure to maintain current documentation or comply with health and compliance requirements, including incomplete, missing, or late submissions, may result in denial of clinical placement eligibility, inability to participate in required clinical experiences, removal from a nursing course, forfeiture of admission or program placement, and/or dismissal from the ADN Program.

Required documentation includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- A negative TB blood test (QuantiFERON-TB) completed within the last year is required. If the QuantiFERON-TB blood test is positive, a negative chest x-ray, documentation of INH administration, and an annual TB Symptom Questionnaire are required.
- Two doses of the COVID-19 vaccine and one booster are required.
- Positive titers for measles/rubeola, mumps, and rubella (MMR) completed within the last year are required. If titer results are negative, two doses of the MMR vaccine spaced one month apart are required. In the case of negative titers, the student should consult with their physician regarding MMR boosters and recommendations for repeat titers to confirm immunity.
- A positive titer for varicella (chickenpox) completed within the last year is required. If the titer is negative, two doses of the varicella vaccine spaced at least one to two months apart are required. In the case of a negative titer, the student should consult with their physician regarding varicella boosters and recommendations for repeat titers to confirm immunity.
- A positive hepatitis B titer completed within the last year is required. If the titer is negative, the hepatitis B vaccine series must be completed as follows: dose 1, dose 2 one month later, and dose 3 six months after dose 2. In the case of a negative titer, the student should consult with their physician regarding the hepatitis B vaccine series and recommendations for repeat titers to confirm immunity. If the hepatitis B series is initiated due to a negative titer, dose 2 must be completed by the end of the first week of school.
- Documentation of a tetanus, diphtheria, and acellular pertussis (Tdap) vaccine administered within the last seven years is required. The Td vaccine is not acceptable.
- Influenza (flu) vaccination for the current flu season/calendar year is required. Because seasonal flu vaccines are not usually available until August, this requirement must be completed by August 31, 2026. The Student Health Clinic located at Laney College in the Student Center (Room 410) may offer free flu vaccines. Students should contact the clinic at (510) 464-3134 or PCCDHealthClinic@peralta.edu to confirm availability.

- American Heart Association Basic Life Support (BLS) Healthcare Provider certification completed between June 1 and August 17, 2026, is required.
- Criminal Background Check clearance with report results indicating a clear status is required. This must be completed through CastleBranch and submitted within three weeks of acceptance or at least one week prior to the ADN Program Orientation, whichever occurs first.

  Applicants who do not receive a clear background check will not be permitted to continue in the admission process. Such applicants may reapply to the program once a clear background check has been obtained and submitted. In the event of forfeiture of admission due to an unclear background check, the applicant's seat will be offered to a candidate on the waitlist. After admission to the program, students may be required to complete additional background checks to meet specific clinical agency requirements. For example, certain clinical placements (e.g., Kaiser facilities) may require a background check completed within 90 days prior to the start date of the clinical rotation. Students must comply with all clinical agency guidelines and timelines.
- 12-Panel Drug Screening clearance with report results indicating a clear/negative status is required. This must be completed through CastleBranch and submitted within three weeks of acceptance or at least one week prior to the ADN Program Orientation, whichever occurs first.

  Applicants who do not receive a negative drug screening result will not be permitted to continue in the admission process. Such applicants may reapply to the program once a negative drug screening has been obtained and submitted. In the event of forfeiture of admission due to a positive drug screening result, the applicant's seat will be offered to a candidate on the waitlist. After admission to the program, students may be required to complete additional drug screenings to meet specific clinical agency requirements. For example, certain clinical placements (e.g., Kaiser facilities) may require a drug screening completed within 60 days prior to the start date of the clinical rotation. Students must comply with all clinical agency guidelines and timelines.
- N95 fit-testing for a respirator mask completed by the end of September 2026 is required. This may be arranged for all students on campus. Documentation must include the make and model of the mask, as well as the NIOSH/MSHA number (not only the N95 name). Acceptable NIOSH-approved masks include the 3M 1860 and 3M 1870+.

The documentation list above reflects the combined requirements of the clinical agencies traditionally utilized by the ADN Program and aligns with current Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommendations.

CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECK AND DRUG SCREENING CLEARANCE

All clinical agencies affiliated with the ADN Program require students to complete a 12-panel criminal background check and drug screening to receive clearance to participate in the clinical laboratory practice experiences. Background checks for individuals with direct patient contact in hospitals or clinical agencies are mandated by The Joint Commission. Each clinical agency establishes its own specific requirements regarding background checks and drug screenings, including the time frame in which they must be completed prior to the first clinical day. Students must comply with the requirements of the assigned clinical agency to be cleared for clinical placement.

For additional information, students may refer to the following resources:

California Board of Registered Nursing - FAQs Concerning Licensure
California Board of Registered Nursing - Background Checks for Student Clinical Placement

PROGRAM CURRICULUM AND COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

The ADN program curriculum is taught over four semesters. To remain in good standing and continue in the program, students must earn a minimum letter grade of “C” (75% or higher) in all nursing courses. While each course has a distinct focus, the following content areas are integrated throughout the nursing curriculum:

- Nursing process
- Nursing theories
- Intervention skills in preventive, remedial, supportive, and rehabilitative nursing care
- Behavioral and social aspects of human development across the lifespan
- Gerontology and pain management
- Knowledge and skills necessary to develop collegial relationships with interdisciplinary healthcare team members
- Effective and therapeutic communication skills
- Foundational natural sciences, including human anatomy and physiology, and cultural patterns
- Human development and behavior related to health and illness

FIRST SEMESTER COURSES

During the fall semester of the first year in the ADN Program, students are required to successfully complete the following nursing courses concurrently:

- Nursing 1: Fundamentals in Nursing
- Nursing 11: Professional and Theoretical Concepts
- Nursing 12: Dosage Calculation

- Nursing 14: Nutrition in Nursing
- Nursing 20: Critical Thinking in Nursing

Nursing 1 includes a total of 52.5 theory lecture hours and 210 clinical laboratory practice hours for the 17.5-week semester. Nursing 11, Nursing 12, and Nursing 20 include a total of 17.5 theory lecture hours for the semester. Nursing 14 includes a total of 35 theory lecture hours for the semester.

Nursing 1 clinical laboratory practice begins in the skills and simulation laboratories during the first 8 weeks of the semester. Clinical skills and simulation laboratory experiences provide students with opportunities to practice physical assessment and fundamental nursing skills in a simulated clinical environment. Students engage in constructive self- and peer-evaluation, identifying individual learning needs and goals with guidance and feedback from instructors in settings that mimic hospital or clinical agency environments. The integration of skills and simulation experiences with classroom learning is essential to the curriculum, allowing students to apply theoretical knowledge, develop clinical judgment, strengthen therapeutic communication, and build confidence prior to providing care in actual clinical settings. These experiences ensure that students are prepared to deliver safe, competent, and patient-centered nursing care when they transition into their first clinical rotation in this first semester of the ADN Program curriculum.

Starting in Week 9, students then proceed to direct patient care experiences for the remainder of the semester. Direct patient care experiences in hospitals or other healthcare facilities allow students to apply nursing knowledge, skills, and clinical judgment to their patient care under the supervision of qualified nursing faculty. These clinical laboratory practice experiences enable students to integrate theoretical knowledge with real-world patient care, develop therapeutic communication skills, and participate in collaborative interactions with healthcare team members. In addition, students assess patient needs, implement appropriate nursing interventions, and evaluate patient outcomes as they demonstrate safe, competent, and patient-centered nursing care. Clinical schedules may vary based on clinical agency availability and operational constraints. While clinical days are typically scheduled Tuesday through Friday, weekend scheduling may be utilized depending on clinical agency and instructor availability.

Students who successfully complete Nursing 1, Nursing 11, Nursing 12, Nursing 14, and Nursing 20 will advance to the second semester of the ADN Program curriculum.

NURSING 1: FUNDAMENTALS IN NURSING (7 UNITS)

Prerequisites: BIOL 2 or 20A, BIOL 3, BIOL 4 or 20B, COMM 20, ENGL C1000 OR C1000E, ENGL 1B, PSYCH 1, SOC 1, STAT C1000, GE Area 6

Corequisites: NURS 11, NURS 12, NURS 14, NURS 20

Fundamental nursing concepts and practices: Development of care and diagnostic skills; emerging trends in the promotion and conservation of health for individuals, families, and communities; and history of health care and changing concepts of health and illness.

Application of concepts from the Neuman Systems Model, Roy Adaptation Model, and Watson's Theory of Human Caring to underscore the importance of caring and humanistic values in nursing practice.

NURSING 11: PROFESSIONAL AND THEORETICAL CONCEPTS (1 UNIT)

Corequisites: NURS 1, NURS 12, NURS 14, NURS 20

Professional and theoretical concepts of nursing: Legal and ethical aspects, theories that shape the profession of nursing, and the numerous issues that confront nurses daily in their practice based on the Neuman Systems Model, Roy Adaptation Model, and Watson's Theory of Human Caring.

NURSING 12: DOSAGE CALCULATION (1 UNIT)

Corequisites: NURS 1, NURS 11, NURS 14, NURS 20

Calculation of prescribed medication and fluids; systems of measurement and medical abbreviations in the preparation and administration of medications; mathematical skills in the calculation of medication dosages and fluid replacement.

NURSING 14: NUTRITION IN NURSING (2 UNITS)

Corequisites: NURS 1, NURS 11, NURS 12, NURS 20

Basic principles of nutrition science, human growth and development needs, community nutrition, and clinical nutrition; knowledge for provision of a healthy nutritional status within parameters and cultural context of individual patient and family needs.

NURSING 20: CRITICAL THINKING IN NURSING (1 UNIT)

Corequisites: NURS 1, NURS 11, NURS 12, NURS 14

Assessment, implementation and evaluation of clinical data: Observation and assessment of presenting situations; identification of client concerns and analysis of cues; analysis of information from different sources (e.g., medical history, vital signs); evaluation and prioritization of hypotheses; definition of a set of interventions; generation and implementation of evidence-based solutions; and evaluation of outcomes.

SECOND SEMESTER COURSES

During the spring semester of the first year in the ADN Program, students are required to complete the following nursing courses concurrently:

- Nursing 3A: Maternity Nursing
- Nursing 3B: Pediatric Nursing
- Nursing 13: Pharmacology in Nursing

The Nursing 3A and Nursing 3B courses include a total of 52.5 theory lecture hours and 105 clinical laboratory practice hours for the 17.5-week semester. Clinical laboratory practice will include direct patient care experience in a hospital or other healthcare facility,

along with additional hours in the skills and simulation laboratories. Clinical hours may vary based on facility availability and operational constraints. While clinical days are usually scheduled Tuesday through Friday, weekend scheduling may be utilized depending on clinical agency and instructor availability. Nursing 13 includes a total of 35 theory lecture hours for the semester.

Students who successfully complete Nursing 3A, Nursing 3B, and Nursing 13 in the second semester will advance to the third semester, where they will enroll concurrently in Nursing 4A: Intermediate Medical-Surgical Nursing and Nursing 4B: Psychiatric Nursing.

NURSING 3A: MATERNITY NURSING (5 UNITS)

Prerequisites: NURS 1, NURS 11, NURS 12, NURS 14, NURS 20

Corequisites: NURS 3B, NURS 13

Theory and guided clinical practice, in collaboration with nursing and healthcare team members, to adults and newborns in a hospital maternity setting: Integration of Neuman Systems Model, Roy Adaptation Model, and Watson's Theory of Human Caring in the assessment, planning, implementation, and evaluation of safe, competent, comprehensive, culturally-competent nursing care.

NURSING 3B: PEDIATRIC NURSING (5 UNITS)

Prerequisites: NURS 1, NURS 11, NURS 12, NURS 14, NURS 20

Corequisites: NURS 3A, NURS 13

Nursing care of infants, children, and adolescents: Growth and development, health promotion, illness prevention, and family-centered care. Application of the nursing process and clinical judgment in the care of pediatric patients experiencing common acute and chronic health conditions in acute and community health care settings based on the Neuman Systems Model, Roy Adaptation Model, and Watson's Theory of Human Caring.

NURSING 13: PHARMACOLOGY IN NURSING (2 UNITS)

Prerequisites: NURS 1, NURS 11, NURS 12, NURS 14, NURS 20

Corequisites: NURS 3A, NURS 3B

Pharmacokinetics and pharmacodynamics of drugs: General pathophysiology of diseases; drug classifications, therapeutic uses, and dosages; indications and usage of medications; drug side effects, adverse reactions, and toxicity.

THIRD SEMESTER COURSES

During the fall semester of the second year in the ADN Program, students are required to complete the following nursing courses concurrently:

- Nursing 4A: Intermediate Medical-Surgical Nursing
- Nursing 4B: Psychiatric Nursing

Nursing 4A includes a total of 52.5 theory lecture hours and 210 clinical laboratory practice hours for the 17.5-week semester. Nursing 4B includes a total of 52.5 theory lecture hours and 105 clinical laboratory practice hours for the semester. Clinical laboratory practice hours consist of direct patient care experience in a hospital or other healthcare facility, in addition to skills and simulation laboratory experiences. Hospital clinical schedules may vary based on facility availability and operational constraints. While clinical days are usually scheduled Tuesday through Friday, weekend scheduling may be utilized depending on clinical agency and clinical instructor availability.

Students who successfully complete Nursing 4A and Nursing 4B in the third semester will advance to the fourth and final semester, where they will enroll concurrently in Nursing 5: Advanced Medical-Surgical Nursing and Nursing 10: Leadership and Transition to Practice.

NURSING 4A: INTERMEDIATE MEDICAL-SURGICAL NURSING (7 UNITS)

Prerequisites: NURS 1, NURS 3A, NURS 3B, NURS 11, NURS 12, NURS 13, NURS 14, NURS 20

Corequisites: NURS 4B

Theory and guided practice of collaborating with nursing and healthcare team members to deliver competent care to adults in a medical, surgical and geriatric clinical setting: Assessing, planning, implementing, and evaluating nursing care for adult patients facing increasingly complex physical, emotional, social, and cultural challenges based on the Neuman Systems Model, Roy Adaptation Model, and Watson's Theory of Human Caring.

NURSING 4B: PSYCHIATRIC NURSING (5 UNITS)

Prerequisites: NURS 1, NURS 3A, NURS 3B, NURS 11, NURS 12, NURS 13, NURS 14, NURS 20

Corequisites: NURS 4A

Theory and guided practice of psychiatric care: Planning, implementing, and evaluating care of patients with increasingly complex levels of physical, social and emotional disruption based on the Neuman Systems Model, Roy Adaptation Model, and Watson's Theory of Human Caring.

FOURTH SEMESTER COURSES

During the spring semester of the second year in the ADN Program, students are required to complete the following nursing courses concurrently:

- Nursing 5: Advanced Medical-Surgical Nursing
- Nursing 10: Leadership and Transition to Practice

Nursing 5 includes a total of 52.5 theory lecture hours and 210 clinical laboratory practice hours for the 17.5-week semester. Clinical laboratory practice for Nursing 5 consists of direct patient care experience in a hospital or other healthcare facility, in addition to skills and simulation laboratory experiences. Clinical schedules may vary based on facility

availability and operational constraints. While clinical days are usually scheduled Tuesday through Friday, weekend scheduling may be utilized depending on clinical agency and clinical instructor availability. Nursing 10 includes a total of 52.5 theory lecture hours for the semester.

Students who successfully complete Nursing 5 and Nursing 10 and meet all additional program, College, and District requirements shall be eligible for graduation.

NURSING 5: ADVANCED MEDICAL-SURGICAL NURSING (7 UNITS)

Prerequisites: NURS 1, NURS 3A, NURS 3B, NURS 4A, NURS 4B, NURS 11, NURS 12, NURS 13, NURS 14, NURS 20

Corequisite: NURS 10

Introduction to advanced medical-surgical nursing: Clinical practice for critically ill patients, study of illness and patient care management, and development of leadership skills applicable to clinical settings.

NURSING 10: LEADERSHIP AND TRANSITION TO PRACTICE (3 UNITS)

Prerequisites: NURS 1, NURS 3A, NURS 3B, NURS 4A, NURS 4B, NURS 11, NURS 12, NURS 13, NURS 14, NURS 20

Corequisite: NURS 5

Leadership and management styles in health care delivery systems: Theoretical principles of leadership behavior and management skills; organizational structure, resource management, collaboration, team building, delegation, and conflict resolution; and transition to practice capstone to complete program of study.

GERIATRICS: INTEGRATED CURRICULUM

Geriatric content is integrated throughout the Nursing 1, Nursing 4A, Nursing 4B, and Nursing 5 courses to prepare students to provide safe, competent nursing care to older adults. Instruction and clinical laboratory practice experiences emphasize age-related physiological, psychological, and sociocultural changes, as well as management of common health conditions affecting the aging population. Through this integrated approach, students develop the knowledge, skills, and clinical judgment necessary to promote safety, maintain functional ability, and support the health and quality of life of older adults across a variety of health care settings as they deliver compassionate, culturally responsive, and evidence-based nursing care.

GENERAL COURSE INFORMATION

All nursing courses that comprise the ADN Program curriculum provide essential knowledge and skills that are fundamental to the student's ability to deliver high-quality holistic nursing care. Each course contributes to the development and refinement of critical thinking, clinical judgment, professional competency, and the student's capacity to provide

safe, effective, compassionate, and culturally-sensitive nursing care to clients across diverse health care settings.

There are six courses in the ADN Program nursing course sequence that include both theory lecture and clinical laboratory experience components. These courses are:

- Nursing 1: Fundamentals in Nursing
- Nursing 3A: Maternity Nursing
- Nursing 3B: Pediatric Nursing
- Nursing 4A: Intermediate Medical-Surgical Nursing
- Nursing 4B: Psychiatric Nursing
- Nursing 5: Advanced Medical-Surgical Nursing

There are five courses in the ADN Program nursing course sequence that include theory lecture only:

- Nursing 10: Leadership and Transition to Practice
- Nursing 11: Professional and Theoretical Concepts
- Nursing 12: Dosage Calculation
- Nursing 13: Pharmacology in Nursing
- Nursing 14: Nutrition in Nursing
- Nursing 20: Critical Thinking in Nursing

To successfully pass courses that include both theory and clinical laboratory practice components, students must earn a minimum of 75% in the theory portion and receive a grade of “Satisfactory” in the clinical portion. Both requirements must be met to pass the course. For courses that consist solely of a theory lecture component, students must earn a minimum overall course grade of 75% to pass. Failure to meet these minimum requirements will result in the student’s inability to progress in the nursing course sequence. If the failure occurs in Nursing 5, the final course in the nursing sequence, the student will not have met the criteria for program completion and will not be eligible to graduate and participate in the ADN Program pinning ceremony.

COLLEGE AND PROGRAM CEREMONIES

MERRITT COLLEGE COMMENCEMENT CEREMONY

Nursing students graduating from the ADN Program, along with nursing faculty and the Program Director, are strongly encouraged to participate in the annual college-wide commencement ceremony held each May at Paramount Theatre in Oakland, CA. Commencement honors students’ academic accomplishments and celebrates the completion of their educational journey alongside fellow graduates, faculty, family, and friends. Information regarding graduation eligibility, application procedures, regalia, and

ceremony details will be provided by the College and communicated to students prior to graduation.

ADN Program students are also encouraged to designate a student representative to participate in the Graduation Committee meetings to assist with planning and coordination efforts. In support of student achievement and program representation, ADN Program faculty and the Program Director are likewise encouraged to attend the Graduation Committee meetings.

ADN PROGRAM PINNING CEREMONY

The pinning ceremony is a longstanding nursing tradition that commemorates a student's transition from nursing student to professional nurse. This symbolic event honors the completion of a rigorous nursing education program and recognizes the graduate's commitment to the values and responsibilities of the nursing profession. The tradition dates back to Florence Nightingale, who awarded medals of excellence to the nurses she trained and has evolved into the modern ceremony in which graduates receive a nursing pin unique to their school that represents the identity, history, and values of their nursing program.

The ADN Program pinning ceremony is a special milestone for nursing students, faculty, family, and friends. It celebrates the graduates' academic achievement, dedication to patient care, and readiness to enter professional nursing practice. Plans for the ADN Program pinning ceremony are organized by the student class officers and class representatives of each graduating class under the supervision and guidance of a Faculty Class Advisor and the Program Director. General guidelines and additional information about the pinning ceremony can be located in Appendix A.

CLINICAL SKILLS/SIMULATION LABORATORY LEARNING

The clinical skills and simulation laboratories provide students with opportunities to practice and refine nursing skills in a supervised learning environment, supporting the achievement of course learning objectives. Instruction and skill development are guided by course instructors to promote the development of safe, competent, and proficient nursing practice.

Each nursing course with a clinical laboratory practice component includes mandatory weekly skills and simulation laboratory sessions, as well as periodic open skills laboratory sessions throughout the semester. During mandatory sessions, instructors cover pre-scheduled topics and designated nursing skills. During open skills sessions, a faculty member will be present and available while students practice nursing skills they wish to strengthen or that have been identified by their clinical instructor as needing further development.

The operation of the clinical skills and simulation laboratories is consistent with the regulations of the CA BRN, ADN Program policies, applicable State Education Codes, and Peralta Community College District policies.

LEARNING PROCESS

Students learn and practice nursing skills and concepts while engaging in constructive self- and peer-evaluation within a simulated clinical environment. With instructor guidance and feedback, students identify individual learning needs and establish goals for continued skill development. They practice both computer-based simulation activities and hands-on nursing skills with the goal of demonstrating proficiency under the supervision of the clinical skills laboratory instructor or course clinical instructor. Learning experiences in the laboratory reinforce theoretical concepts introduced in classroom instruction through review of lecture content, eBooks, instructional videos, question-and-answer sessions, and NCLEX-style question review. These activities are combined with instructor-directed, hands-on practice using evidence-based patient care scenarios that reflect current standards of nursing practice.

INCLUSIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Simulation scenarios incorporate multi-ethnic, multicultural, and gender-related considerations to reflect the diversity of patient populations in health care settings. This approach helps prepare students to provide culturally responsive and patient-centered care in the clinical setting.

CLINICAL READINESS

Participation in mandatory skills, simulation, and open skills laboratory sessions supports the development and validation of clinical skills necessary for safe participation in clinical laboratory practice experiences involving direct patient care. These sessions reinforce the student's knowledge and promote clinical competence by strengthening clinical judgment, technical skills, and therapeutic communication. Open skills laboratory sessions help ensure that students are prepared to deliver safe, competent, compassionate, and patient-centered nursing care in assigned hospitals or other healthcare agency settings.

Students may be required by their instructor to attend additional clinical skills laboratory sessions during the semester for practice, skills development, or remediation. Students are also encouraged to utilize open laboratory sessions to review and strengthen nursing skills based on their individual learning needs and goals.

CLINICAL SKILLS VALIDATION AND COMPETENCY REQUIREMENTS

Prior to performing nursing skills in the clinical laboratory practice settings (hospital or other healthcare clinical agencies), students are required to demonstrate competency in designated nursing skills, also known as "skills check-offs." Clinical skills validation in the skills or simulation laboratory occurs under the supervision of qualified nursing faculty. Students must successfully demonstrate the required psychomotor skills, clinical reasoning, and professional behaviors in accordance with established program standards. Skills competency is evaluated using standardized performance criteria based on current evidence-based nursing practice and program learning outcomes. Skills videos and checklists may be found in the ATI Engage Skills Modules.

Students may be required to repeat practice sessions in the mandatory skills, open skills, or simulation laboratories until competency is demonstrated. Instructor feedback and guided remediation are provided to support student learning and skill development. Successful completion of required skills validation is necessary for progression to clinical laboratory practice experiences. This systematic process helps ensure that students enter clinical settings prepared to perform nursing skills safely, effectively, and in accordance with professional standards of practice.

SKILLS AND SIMULATION LAB GUIDELINES FOR NURSING STUDENTS

LAB CONDUCT & PREPARATION

- Arrive on time to the skills and simulation lab in student uniform.
- Bring necessary materials (stethoscope, watch, penlight, electronic device, notes, etc.).
- Prepare for the assigned topics or scenarios to be covered during each skills or simulation lab session.
- Silence phones and avoid distractions.
- Do not enter the lab until instructed to do so.

LAB ENVIRONMENT

- No eating or drinking is allowed in the skills and simulation labs at any time.
- Keep all food, beverages, and gum outside the lab space.
- Maintain a clean and professional clinical environment.

HAND HYGIENE & INFECTION CONTROL

- Perform hand hygiene upon entering and before leaving the skills and simulation labs.
- Clean individual desks/workstations with sanitizing wipes upon entering and prior to leaving the skills and simulation labs.
- Perform hand hygiene before and after patient/manikin contact.
- Wear gloves at all times when working with simulation manikins.
- Use additional PPE when indicated.
- Maintain clean and organized workspaces.
- Dispose of materials properly (i.e., sharps only in sharps container).

PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR

- Communicate respectfully with peers, instructors, and simulated patients.
- Use therapeutic communication techniques.

- Stay in role throughout the simulation.
- Take responsibility for your actions and decisions.
- Learn from mistakes. Simulation is for skill-building.
- Demonstrate readiness for real patient care.

THINK & ACT LIKE A NURSE

- Treat every simulation as a real-life patient care situation.
- Use the nursing process (assessment, diagnosis, planning, implementation, evaluation).
- Prioritize patient safety, comfort, privacy, and dignity at all times.
- Verbalize your clinical reasoning (e.g., “I’m checking lung sounds because…”).

EQUIPMENT USE SAFETY

- Handle all Laerdal medical manikins and equipment with care and respect.
- Do not force joints, insert unauthorized items, or tamper with equipment.
- Do not remove and/or transport manikins from their designated patient beds.
- Report any manikin malfunctions or damage immediately to the instructor.
- Follow instructor guidance regarding all medical devices and equipment (e.g., IV pumps, monitors, defibrillators, etc.).

MEDICATION SAFETY

- Follow the 6 Rights of Safe Medication Administration: Right Patient, Right Medication, Right Dose, Right Route, Right Time, and Right Documentation.
- Always verbalize medication checks during simulation.
- Never administer real medications unless explicitly instructed.

COMMUNICATION & TEAMWORK

- Use structured communication tools like SBAR (Situation, Background, Assessment, Recommendation).
- Delegate appropriately when working in groups.
- Support your team and speak up if you notice safety concerns.

DOCUMENTATION

- Chart accurately and in a timely manner during or after simulation.
- Use correct medical terminology.
- Do not falsify documentation.

PRE-BRIEF AND DEBRIEF

- ❖ Actively engage in pre-briefing with instructor and peers to understand student learning objectives for the assigned simulation.
- ❖ Ask questions if you are unsure about expectations.
- ❖ During debriefing:
    - Reflect on your performance honestly.
    - Accept and give constructive feedback.
    - Focus on improving clinical judgment.

CONFIDENTIALITY

- ❖ Keep all simulation scenarios and peer performance confidential.
- ❖ Do not discuss or share details on social media or outside the classroom.

Students are required to acknowledge, sign, and submit the *Skills and Simulation Lab Guidelines Agreement* located in Appendix B to the course instructor by the end of first week of school.

ASSESSMENT TECHNOLOGIES INSTITUTE (ATI) POLICY AND CURRICULUM INTEGRATION

The ADN Program incorporates resources from Assessment Technologies Institute (ATI) as integral learning and assessment tools to support student success, strengthen content retention, and prepare graduates to pass the National Council Licensure Examination for Registered Nurses (NCLEX-RN). According to ATI data, validated by the external psychometrics firm ACS Ventures, students enrolled in ATI-supported nursing programs have demonstrated significantly stronger NCLEX performance compared to students in non-ATI programs. Additionally, institutions that partner with ATI have reported an average 11% increase in NCLEX-RN pass rates over a two-year period (ATI, 2026).

ATI resources are designed to not only improve licensure examination outcomes but to also enhance critical thinking, deepen content mastery, increase student engagement, and strengthen clinical judgment. These tools accommodate diverse learning styles and include standardized online assessments, simulated patient experiences, case studies, focused remediation plans, practice quizzes, test-taking strategies, and predictive analytics. Students receive structured and continuous academic support from ATI Nurse Educators beginning in the Fundamentals in Nursing course and continuing through graduation and NCLEX-RN preparation. These services are designed to promote academic success, clinical readiness, and successful NCLEX-RN outcomes.

Students will receive online access to ATI learning resources and are required to complete practice and proctored ATI assessments in the following nursing courses: Nursing 1, Nursing 3A, Nursing 3B, Nursing 4A, Nursing 4B, Nursing 5, Nursing 10, Nursing 13,

Nursing 14, and Nursing 20. Specific ATI assessment requirements and testing schedules will be outlined in each course syllabus. Practice assessments will be completed remotely online. Proctored assessments will be administered on campus in the Merritt College Learning Center or in the Barbara Lee Science & Allied Health Center Computer Lab.

ATI ASSESSMENT POLICY

The ADN Program integrates ATI standardized testing and remediation as a required component of specific nursing courses. ATI assessments measure student competency using benchmark performance levels aligned with NCLEX-RN standards.

Accomplishment of each level of nursing education indicates that a defined level of competency has been achieved. Measuring competency through ATI-standardized assessments is an essential component of student progression, curriculum evaluation, and NCLEX-RN readiness.

ATI assessments, remediation activities, learning modules, and other ATI assignments will account for 10% of the total course grade for Nursing 1, Nursing 3A, Nursing 3B, Nursing 4A, Nursing 4B, Nursing 5, Nursing 10, Nursing 13, Nursing 14, and Nursing 20.

ATI REMEDIATION REQUIREMENTS

Faculty in the ADN Program believes that ATI is a valuable resource that supports student learning, strengthens clinical reasoning, and enhances preparation for success in the nursing program and on the NCLEX-RN.

After completing each ATI practice assessment, students must complete a minimum of one hour of focused remediation using ATI Focused Review tools. Students are expected to achieve Level 2 proficiency on the ATI proctored assessment for each nursing course.

Required remediation is based on the level achieved:

- Level 3: Minimum 1-hour Focused Review
- Level 2: Minimum 2-hour Focused Review
- Level 1: Minimum 3-hour Focused Review
- Below Level 1: Minimum 4-hour Focused Review

Additional remediation activities may be required for topics missed on the proctored assessment. These may include Active Learning Templates, ATI Pulse, Board Vitals, flashcards, and Student Assessment Performance Reflection assignments.

Students who achieve Level 2 or Level 3 are not required to retake the proctored assessment. Students who score Level 1 or Below Level 1 must complete a proctored assessment retake. If a student does not achieve Level 2 on the retake and is scheduled to progress in the ADN Program nursing course sequence, additional ATI-directed remediation will be assigned at the discretion of the course instructor. The *ATI Content Mastery Series Grading Rubric* is outlined in Appendix C.

ATI CAPSTONE FOR NCLEX PREPARATION

The ATI Capstone Content Review is a comprehensive, structured review designed to prepare students for graduation and successful completion of the NCLEX-RN. Implemented alongside Nursing 10: Leadership and Transition to Practice, the ATI Capstone provides a seven-week comprehensive review of essential nursing concepts across the curriculum. The program includes ATI Capstone proctored pre-assessments and post-assessments, a Content Mastery Series of assessments, individualized learning assessments based on performance, and ATI Focused Review activities. Students have on-demand access to review materials and real-time progress reporting, while both students and faculty receive orientation and guidance from an ATI Nurse Educator.

The purpose of ATI Capstone is to strengthen students' clinical knowledge, identify areas of content deficit, and increase readiness for the NCLEX-RN. By engaging in weekly learning activities and targeted assessments, students reinforce critical thinking concepts and develop greater confidence in their clinical decision-making abilities.

National ATI outcomes indicated that student cohorts demonstrate an average increase of approximately 5.2% between the ATI Capstone proctored pre-assessments and post-assessments. Through this structured review process, the program supports improved ATI Comprehensive Predictor performance and contributes to higher NCLEX-RN pass rates and successful transition into entry-level registered nursing practice.

ADN TO BSN EDUCATIONAL PATHWAYS

CONCURRENT ENROLLMENT ADN TO BSN PROGRAM AT CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, EAST BAY (CSUEB)

The ADN Program maintains a partnership with California State University, East Bay (CSUEB) that provides current ADN students with an opportunity to begin coursework toward a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) degree while enrolled in the ADN Program. After successful admission to both the ADN Program and CSUEB ADN-BSN Program, students complete designated CSUEB nursing courses, offered online, concurrently with their Merritt College nursing coursework. Specifically, students are eligible to take one course at no cost (from a selection of 6 courses developed by CSUEB) during the third and fourth semesters of the ADN Program. Following graduation from the ADN Program, students continue their studies at CSUEB to fulfill BSN degree requirements. Upon successful completion of the ADN Program, passing the NCLEX-RN, and completing the remaining CSUEB ADN-BSN Program coursework, students will earn a BSN degree from CSUEB. This partnership offers qualified ADN Program students automatic admission into the CSUEB ADN-BSN Program, supporting the continued professional development of ADN students while facilitating seamless progression to baccalaureate-level nursing education.

POST-LICENSURE RN TO BSN PROGRAM AT CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY EAST BAY

The ADN Program maintains a partnership with California State University, East Bay that provides ADN graduates with an opportunity to continue their nursing education in pursuit of a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) degree. Upon graduation from the ADN Program and successful attainment of California Registered Nurse licensure, graduates who apply and are admitted to the CSUEB Post-Licensure RN-to-BSN Program at CSUEB may choose to complete the program through either a one-year intensive track or a two-year part-time track. Coursework in the RN-to-BSN Program is delivered primarily through an online format, with the exception of the required community health clinical experience. This partnership supports the continued professional development of ADN graduates and facilitates progression toward baccalaureate-level nursing education.

Additional information on the CSUEB Post-Licensure RN-to-BSN Program is available at: https://www.csueastbay.edu/nursing/bsn-programs/prospective-students/rn-bsn-program.html

LVN TO RN PATHWAY: 30-UNIT OPTION

Licensed Vocational Nurses (LVNs) who maintain a current California LVN license in good standing may be eligible to take the NCLEX-RN after completing nursing courses in an accredited nursing program. Theory and clinical laboratory practice courses must include advanced content in medical-surgical, psychiatric, and geriatric nursing and may not exceed a total of 30 semester units, in accordance with CA BRN regulations.

The LVN to RN 30-Unit Option at Merritt College requires completion of the following basic science and nursing courses:

- BIO 20 A: Anatomy and Physiology (4 units theory, 1 unit lab)
- BIO 3: Microbiology (4 units theory)
- NURS 4A: Intermediate Medical-Surgical Nursing (3 units theory, 4 units clinical)
- NURS 5: Advanced Medical-Surgical Nursing (3 units theory, 4 units clinical)
- NURS 4B: Psychiatric Nursing (3 units theory, 2 units clinical)
- NURS 13: Pharmacology in Nursing (2 units theory)

ELIGIBILITY AND APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

Applicants requesting the LVN to RN 30-Unit Option are required to:

- Provide documentation of their CA LVN license in good standing.
- Meet all admissions criteria outlined in the *Merritt College ADN Program Admissions Brochure*, including but not limited to prerequisite and general education courses, minimum GPA, minimum TEAS score, and required health documentation and certifications.

- Schedule an appointment with the ADN Program Director to discuss educational and licensure implications of the LVN to RN 30-Unit Option Pathway.
- Sign the LVN to RN 30-Unit Option Waiver acknowledging that they have been provided with a thorough explanation of the 30-Unit Option Pathway and understand subsequent licensing procedure, including registered nurse licensing to only the State of California.

NCLEX-RN ELIGIBILITY, CALIFORNIA LICENSING, AND LIMITATIONS

Students who complete the LVN to RN 30-Unit Option (*CA BRN Regulation Sec. 2736.6*) are eligible to take the NCLEX-RN. However, completion of this option does not result in the awarding of an Associate Degree in Nursing (ADN) from Merritt College and involvement in the pinning ceremony. Official transcripts will reflect eligibility for licensing via the LVN to RN 30-Unit Option with credit/non-credit grading of courses (credit is received for course grades of 75% or higher). The LVN to RN 30-Unit Option is unique to California; therefore, individuals who complete this option may encounter restrictions when seeking RN licensure by endorsement in states outside of California. Requirements for licensure vary by state and graduates of the 30-Unit Option may not meet educational requirements for RN licensure in other states.

Students who elect the LVN to RN 30-Unit Option will be admitted to nursing courses on a space-available basis only and will be notified of their admission by the ADN Program Director and/or Program Specialist. Students must abide by the Code of Conduct, Honor System, and all other rules and regulations outlined in the *Merritt College ADN Program Student Handbook*.

TRANSFER STUDENT PATHWAY

The ADN Program requires that students transferring from other collegiate nursing programs (ADN or BSN) demonstrate competency in fundamental nursing knowledge and skills. Transfer student admission is done on a space-available basis. Students who are admitted must complete a minimum of two semesters in the ADN Program to be eligible for graduation.

ELIGIBILITY AND APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

All transfer applicants must meet the following requirements:

- Provide official transcripts documenting successful completion of nursing courses from an accredited ADN or BSN program comparable to courses in the ADN Program. Nursing courses must have been completed within the last five years.
- Meet all ADN Program admission requirements as outlined in the *Merritt College ADN Program Admissions Brochure*, including but not limited to completion of prerequisite and general education courses, minimum GPA requirements, minimum TEAS score, and required health documentation and certifications.

COURSE EVALUATION AND PLACEMENT

Transfer students' prior coursework will be reviewed and evaluated by the ADN Program Specialist, Program Director, and/or Faculty Admissions Committee to determine course equivalency. Students who are accepted into the program will be placed at the appropriate cohort level (semester) based on established equivalency. NLN Nursing Acceleration Challenge Exams (NACE) are not required for transfer students.

ADVANCED PLACEMENT PATHWAY

Students may be considered for advanced placement in the ADN Program through one of following pathways: Military Service with Health Care Experience or Licensed Vocational Nurse (LVN) (requesting advanced placement during the application process).

All applicants seeking advanced placement must submit a complete application and meet all admission requirements outlined in the *Merritt College ADN Program Admissions Brochure*. These requirements include but are not limited to a pre-entrance health history and physical examination (including color vision screening), required immunizations and laboratory work, criminal background check and drug screening, current Basic Life Support (BLS) certification, and compliance with all program deadlines.

ADVANCED PLACEMENT FOR MILITARY SERVICE

In alignment with applicable California Code of Regulations and CA State legislation, the ADN Program is committed to awarding credit for relevant military education and health care experience toward the requirements for Registered Nurse licensure.

ELIGIBILITY AND APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

Applicants seeking advanced placement in the ADN Program based on military health care experience (e.g., medics) must:

- Meet all ADN Program admission requirements as outlined in the *Merritt College ADN Program Admissions Brochure*, including but not limited to completion of prerequisite and general education courses, minimum GPA requirements, minimum TEAS score, and required health documentation and certifications.
- Submit a DD-214 (Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty) reflecting an honorable discharge.
- Provide official transcripts from all colleges and institutions attended.
- Submit documentation of military education, training, and clinical experience.
- Provide course descriptions, course syllabi, and/or training outlines for all military education, if applicable.
- Demonstrate recency of education and experience within the past three years.
- Schedule an appointment with the ADN Program Director prior to the application deadline to review eligibility and requirements.

COMPETENCY VALIDATION REQUIREMENTS

Applicants must demonstrate competency in fundamental nursing knowledge and skills by:

- Successfully completing the NLN Nursing Acceleration Challenge Exam (NACE): Foundations of Nursing by March 15 prior to the Fall semester start date. Students are responsible for all fees associated with taking the NLN Nursing Acceleration Challenge Exams.
- Successfully completing a Skills Examination demonstrating competency in required nursing skills with a minimum score of 75%.

ADVANCED PLACEMENT FOR LICENSED VOCATIONAL NURSES (LVN)

Applicants seeking advanced placement in the ADN Program based on Licensed Vocational Nurse (LVN) education and experience must meet the following requirements.

ELIGIBILITY AND APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

- Meet all ADN Program admission requirements as outlined in the *Merritt College ADN Program Admissions Brochure*, including but not limited to completion of prerequisite and general education courses, minimum GPA requirements, minimum TEAS score, and required health documentation and certifications.
- Provide official transcripts from all colleges and institutions attended.
- Submit documentation of LVN education, training, and clinical experience from an accredited institution.
- Provide course descriptions and syllabi for all LVN coursework.
- Demonstrate recency of education and experience within the past three years.
- Schedule an appointment with the ADN Program Director prior to the application deadline to review eligibility and requirements.

COMPETENCY VALIDATION REQUIREMENTS

Applicants must demonstrate competency in nursing knowledge and skills by:

- Successfully completing the NLN Nursing Acceleration Challenge Exam (NACE): Foundations of Nursing
- Successfully completing the following NLN Nursing Acceleration Challenge Exams (NACE) if official transcript shows applicable prior coursework was completed in the LVN Program:
    - *Nursing Care of Adults*
    - *Nursing Care of the Childbearing Family*
    - *Nursing Care of Children*
    - *Nursing Care of the Mental Health Client*

- Successfully completing a Skills Examination demonstrating competency in required nursing skills with a minimum score of 75%

Required NLN Nursing Acceleration Challenge Exams (NACE) must be completed in the semester prior to the student's intended enrollment (by March 15 for fall semester course start dates and by September 15 for spring semester course start dates). Students are responsible for all fees associated with taking the NLN Nursing Acceleration Challenge Exams.

ADVANCED PLACEMENT DETERMINATION FOR APPLICANTS WITH PREVIOUS MILITARY OR LVN HEALTH CARE EXPERIENCE

The ADN Program Director and/or Faculty Admissions Committee determine final placement within the ADN Program based on a comprehensive review of the applicant's qualifications. This review will include evaluation of prior education and clinical experience, performance on required NLN Nursing Acceleration Challenge Exams (NACE), and results of the Skills Competency Examination.

Placement into a specific cohort (semester) is based on the applicant's demonstrated competency and course equivalency. All placement decisions are made in accordance with program standards and space availability. The ADN Program reserves the right to place applicants at the level deemed most appropriate to support student success and ensure patient safety.

Advanced placement is not guaranteed. Meeting minimum eligibility requirements and completing challenge exams does not ensure placement into a specific semester or acceptance into the program.

ADVANCED PLACEMENT POLICY STATEMENT

The ADN Program curriculum is sequential with each semester building upon prior knowledge and clinical competency. Due to the complexity of nursing practice and the responsibility for patient safety, all students seeking advanced placement are expected to demonstrate current knowledge and competency in fundamental nursing concepts. Students are expected to have the ability to apply the following knowledge in the clinical setting:

- Nursing Process: application of the nursing process, including assessment, data collection, identification of patient problems, prioritization, planning, implementation, and evaluation of care
- Nursing Theories: integration of professional and theoretical concepts of nursing theories into evidence-based nursing practice, including application of Neuman Systems Model, Roy Adaptation Model, and Watson's Theory of Human Caring
- Clinical Reasoning and Pathophysiology: ability to integrate theory into clinical practice, analyze pathological conditions, and perform initial and ongoing patient assessments

- Professional Roles and Responsibilities: understanding of professional nursing roles and legal and ethical principles in the health care setting
- Communication Skills: use of therapeutic communication with patients and professional communication with healthcare team members and instructors, including accurate electronic documentation of patient care
- Pharmacology: knowledge of medication classifications, dosage calculations, administration routes, adverse effects, and nursing implications, including safe medication and intravenous fluid administration
- Human Development and Lifespan Care: understanding of physiological and psychosocial changes across the lifespan
- Biological Sciences: knowledge of human anatomy, physiology, pathophysiology, microbiology, and the endocrine system
- Fluid, Electrolyte, and Acid-Base Balance: application of principles related to fluid balance and physiological regulation
- Safety Principles: implementation of safety measures including medication safety, infection control (standard precautions), body mechanics, and environmental safety
- Patient Comfort and Well-Being: knowledge of interventions that promote physical and psychological comfort, including pain management and emotional support
- Organization and Time Management: ability to function efficiently and prioritize patient care in a timely manner
- Immune Response and Asepsis: knowledge of infection prevention, immune function, and aseptic techniques

Students accepted into the ADN Program under the Advanced Placement Pathway (Military or LVN) are required to sign and submit to the Program Director the *Advanced Placement Policy Statement Acknowledgement Form* located in Appendix D.

STUDENT PROGRESSION, RETENTION, AND READMISSION

STUDENT PROGRESSION AND RETENTION REQUIREMENTS

To remain in good standing and progress in the ADN Program, students must meet the following requirements:

- Achieve a minimum score of 75% in all nursing (theory) courses
- Earn a Satisfactory (S) grade in all clinical components of each nursing course

Failure to meet these requirements will result in the inability to continue in the program.

PROCEDURE FOR SEEKING COURSE ASSISTANCE

Students experiencing difficulty in a nursing course are responsible for seeking assistance promptly. Students must schedule an appointment with course faculty to discuss concerns. Third-party participation is not permitted in requests for assistance or academic counseling.

When a student requests assistance, faculty may implement one or more of the following support strategies:

- Referral to Merritt College Student Accessibility Services (SAS) and/or Learning Resource Center
- Remediation utilizing Strategies for Success (see Appendix E)
- Individual remediation utilizing ATI learning materials as assigned by faculty
- Recommendation of peer study groups
- Referral to the Open Skills Laboratory with faculty supervision to improve clinical skills

WITHDRAWAL FROM NURSING COURSES

Students may elect to withdraw from a nursing course and receive a “W” (Withdraw). In such cases, a Withdraw/Passing (W/P) or Withdraw/Failing (W/F) will be recorded, and the student may not continue in the program at that time. Withdrawal is the student’s responsibility; faculty members do not add or drop students.

Students who withdraw from any nursing course must schedule an appointment with the ADN Program Director. They must also repeat the withdrawn course upon re-entry into the ADN Program before advancing in the course sequence, in accordance with program policy.

INCOMPLETE GRADES

Students may receive an Incomplete/Passing (I/P) or Incomplete/Failing (I/F) in the final semester of the program if course requirements, including but not limited to ATI Capstone, are not fully completed. All incomplete coursework must be completed by the program-designated deadline. Students must complete all course requirements to be eligible for graduation. Due to the sequential nature of the ADN Program, progression and graduation are contingent upon completion of all requirements.

FOLLOW-UP FOR WITHDRAWAL OR FAILURE

Students who withdraw from or fail a nursing course will meet with the lead instructor (faculty of record) for academic counseling. The reason(s) for withdrawal or failure will be documented. This information will be used to support program evaluation and annual review of student attrition. Documentation of counseling will be shared with the ADN Program Director and the student. Faculty may assign required remediation, which must be completed before the student is eligible for re-enrollment in the ADN Program.

PROGRAM EVALUATION AND CONTINOUS IMPROVEMENT

The ADN Program is committed to continuous quality improvement and student success. Faculty, the Program Director, and program staff conduct annual reviews of student retention and attrition, along with student course evaluations. Based on these reviews, changes may be implemented in areas such as admissions processes, program structure, course content, academic advising, and student support services.

RE-ENROLLMENT POLICY

Students who do not achieve a minimum score of 75% in a nursing (theory) course, earn an Unsatisfactory (U) grade in a clinical component of a nursing course, and/or withdraw from a nursing course will not be allowed to continue in the ADN Program. If the student wishes to return to the program, they must seek re-enrollment by submitting a written request via email to the ADN Program Director and Faculty Admissions Committee. This re-enrollment request must be submitted by May 1 (for fall semester re-entry) or by December 1 (for spring semester re-entry). Students will be permitted ONE opportunity only to request re-enrollment to the ADN Program.

ELIGIBILITY FOR RE-ENROLLMENT

To be eligible for re-enrollment, the student must meet one or more of the following criteria:

- Earned a letter grade below “C” (below 75%) in a nursing course without a clinical laboratory practice component
- Earned a letter grade below “C” (below 75%) in the theory component of a nursing course that includes a clinical laboratory practice component
- Received a grade of Unsatisfactory in the clinical laboratory practice component of a nursing course
- Withdrew from a nursing course while earning a current letter grade below “C” (below 75%)
- Withdrew from a nursing course while earning a current grade of Unsatisfactory in the clinical laboratory practice component of a nursing course
- Withdrew for non-academic reasons from a nursing course

Upon re-enrollment, the student must repeat both theory and clinical components concurrently for any nursing course in which a grade below “C” (theory) or an Unsatisfactory (clinical) was earned, as well as for any course from which the student withdrew. The repeated course must be successfully completed prior to enrollment in subsequent courses within the ADN Program nursing course sequence.

Re-enrollment is contingent upon space availability and the recommendations of the Faculty Committee as needed. Students re-entering the program must comply with the most current version of the *Student Handbook*. A student who earns a total of two nursing

course grades below “C” (below 75%) and/or Unsatisfactory grades will no longer be eligible to re-enroll in the ADN Program.

FACULTY RESPONSIBILITIES

Faculty involved with the exiting student may establish a written remediation plan or contractual agreement outlining required corrective actions prior to consideration for re-enrollment or readmission. This remediation must be completed and verified before the student is eligible to return to the program.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Students requesting re-enrollment must:

1. Submit a formal letter of intent via email to the ADN Program Director, ADN Program Specialist, and Faculty Admissions Committee.
2. Provide verification of completion of any required remediation or contractual deficiencies. If remediation includes coursework, the student must earn a minimum letter grade of “C”.
3. Submit updated clinical clearance documentation, including a current health history and physical examination with color vision screening, immunizations, lab work, health and equipment screenings, and required certifications as outlined under ADN Program Health Documentation Requirements in the *Student Handbook.*
4. Understand that third-party participation (e.g., relatives, friends, clergy, attorneys, life coaches) is not allowed for readmission requests or counseling.

READMISSION TO THE ADN PROGRAM

Students who leave the ADN Program entirely for any reason, academic or otherwise, for no more than 1.5 years and wish to return must reapply to the program in accordance with current admission policies and procedures. Students re-applying must abide by the Student Responsibilities outlined above under the Re-Enrollment Policy. Readmission is not guaranteed and is based on space availability, current program requirements, and review by the ADN Program Director, ADN Program Specialist, and/or Faculty Admissions Committee.

Applicants must meet all current admission criteria at the time of reapplication and may be required to demonstrate competency through remediation, skills validation, or other assessments as determined by the program. Previous coursework completed in the program will be evaluated for recency and applicability, and students may be required to repeat courses in accordance with program policy.

STUDENT NOTIFICATION OF RE-ENROLLMENT OR READMISSION STATUS

The ADN Program Director and Faculty Admissions Committee are responsible for maintaining a current list of students eligible for re-enrollment or readmission and for determining placements based on space availability. Students will receive written notification from the ADN Program Director, via letter or email, confirming or denying placement in the requested course (or program, if reapplying) after all re-enrollment or readmission requirements have been finalized.

RE-ENROLLMENT OR READMISSION LIMITATIONS

Students are permitted one opportunity only to request re-enrollment or reapply to the ADN Program with a new application. Grounds for disqualification from the ADN Program include, but are not limited to, non-compliance with the ADN Program Honor System, Code of Conduct, or any student rules and regulations established by the ADN Program, Merritt College, or the Peralta Community College District. Students who are dismissed for non-academic reasons related to violations of honesty, integrity, or professional conduct are not eligible for re-enrollment or readmission to the ADN Program.

ACADEMIC POLICIES AND STANDARDS

PROGRAM GRADING POLICY

The ADN Program maintains rigorous academic standards to prepare nursing students to become professional nurses who deliver high-quality, safe, competent, patient-centered holistic care to the communities they serve. Accordingly, students must earn a letter grade of “C” (75% or higher) in all theory components of each nursing course and achieve a grade of “Satisfactory” in all clinical laboratory practice components in order to advance in the nursing course sequence. Grades are not rounded. For example, a final cumulative score of 74.9% on all graded course requirements will not be rounded to 75% and will be recorded as a letter grade of “D.”

The ADN program utilizes an ABSOLUTE GRADING SCALE, as outlined below:

Theory Component	Clinical Component	Grade
90-100	SATISFACTORY	A
80-89		B
75-79		C
60-74		D
59 and below		F
90-100	UNSATISFACTORY	D
80-89		D
75-79		D
60-74		D
59 and below		F

While it is the student's responsibility to identify academic challenges and seek assistance, the instructor will initiate contact and provide academic counseling if the student is earning below a "C" letter grade (less than 75%) or performing below a "Satisfactory" level in the clinical laboratory practice experience at any time during the course. Students who earn below a "C" (less than 75%) in theory or an "Unsatisfactory" grade in the clinical component of a nursing course will not pass the course and will not be eligible to advance in the nursing course sequence.

Students who have concerns about course requirements or an instructor should first discuss the matter directly with the instructor. If needed, the discussion may also include the ADN Program Director. If a concern involves a student's academic or clinical performance, the instructor may discuss the matter with the student only. Questions or complaints regarding an academic grade must be addressed directly with the instructor who issued the grade.

Faculty retain the exclusive authority and responsibility to determine course grades based on their professional judgment. The grade assigned to each student in any course of instruction shall be the grade determined by the course instructor. In accordance with the California Education Code, the grade assigned by the instructor is final and may be changed only through the formal academic grade grievance process upon a showing of mistake, incompetence, fraud, or bad faith on the part of the instructor.

STUDENT ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY

CLASS ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS

Students are required to attend all scheduled class sessions, arrive on time, and actively participate in classroom learning activities and discussions. Consistent attendance and participation are essential components of the learning process and support the development of the knowledge, skills, and professional behaviors necessary for safe nursing practice.

Students are accountable for learning all content presented in reading assignments, classroom lecture and discussions, clinical laboratory practice discussions, PowerPoint lecture slides, ATI resources, and any additional learning materials. Students must inform the instructor ahead of time via email or text (instructor's discretion) if they are unable to attend class. The lead faculty may also require documentation to verify absences related to illness (healthcare provider note), jury duty (court notice), court-mandated appearances (verification of attendance without disclosure of the reason), military duty (official notice), bereavement, transportation emergencies, or other circumstances.

Missed classroom hours must be made up in accordance with instructor guidelines to satisfactorily meet course objective criteria. Each course syllabus includes information regarding make-up assignments for missed classroom time. The specific assignment and due date will be determined by the instructor. Absences not made up in the required manner will result in a 10% deduction from the student's final course grade.

Merritt College policy stipulates that no individuals may audit classes. Consistent with this policy, students are not permitted to bring visitors, children, or pets to the classroom, skills laboratory, simulation laboratory, or clinical areas. Failure to comply with this policy may result in dismissal from the program.

CLINICAL LABORATORY PRACTICE ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS

Students are required to participate in weekly clinical laboratory practice experiences in both the hospital or clinical agency setting and the skills/simulation laboratory (refer to each course syllabus). Students are expected to arrive at the designated clinical start time determined by the instructor and actively participate in direct patient care and assigned clinical learning activities.

Tardiness and absenteeism may affect the student's ability to satisfactorily meet course and clinical objectives. Make-up work will be required for all tardiness after the designated clinical start time and for all clinical absences. If a student arrives late or is unprepared for clinical laboratory practice, the student may not be permitted to participate in the clinical day and will be required to make up the missed clinical hours according to the clinical instructor's guidelines.

Students who miss clinical laboratory practice (or who are frequently tardy or frequently requesting to leave sessions early) in the hospital, clinical agency, or skills/simulation laboratory will be required to attend a designated clinical make-up session in the skills/simulation laboratory for the course and complete the same number of hours that were missed. Absences that are not made up in the required manner, as determined by the instructor, will result in an Unsatisfactory grade for the clinical component of the course and a course failure (grade "F").

Students must notify the clinical instructor of an absence at least one hour prior to the clinical start time via email or text message, as determined by the instructor. Clinical absences will be documented by the lead faculty and clinical instructor. In the case of illness, the clinical agency, clinical instructor, or instructor of record may require medical clearance prior to the student's return to the clinical setting. The ADN Program may also require documentation to verify absences related to illness (healthcare provider note), jury duty (court notice), court-mandated appearances (verification of attendance without disclosure of the reason), military duty (official notice), bereavement, transportation emergencies, or other circumstances.

If a student misses more than one clinical day in the hospital, clinical agency, or skills/simulation laboratory, there is no guarantee that clinical make-up opportunity will be available. In such cases, the student may be deemed ineligible to continue in the course and program. The student will be required to leave the program and may request re-enrollment with a subsequent nursing cohort in accordance with the Re-Enrollment Policy outlined in this handbook and contingent upon space availability.

TARDINESS OR ABSENCE DURING EXAMINATIONS

All students are expected to take course examinations at the scheduled date and time and to arrive punctually in the designated computer lab (either in the Merritt College Learning Center or Barbara Lee Science and Allied Health Center). In the event that the student arrives late to the examination, they must complete the examination within the originally scheduled time frame (start time and end time will be posted in the classroom). They will not be given extra time to complete the examination. If the student is more than 20 minutes late to the examination or is unable to take the examination on the scheduled date and time for any reason, they must schedule a make-up exam on another day within one week of the scheduled exam date (to be determined by the instructor).

It is the responsibility of the student to contact the instructor about their absence prior to the examination and to arrange accommodations to make up the examination prior to the next class session. The ADN Program may require the student to provide documentation verifying absences related to illness (healthcare provider note), jury duty (court notice), court-mandated appearances (verification of attendance without disclosure of the reason), military duty (official notice), bereavement, transportation emergencies, or other circumstances. Regardless of the reason for the tardiness beyond 20 minutes or absence on examination day requiring a make-up examination, there will be a 10% deduction from the student's make-up examination score. The student will be given only one opportunity to make up the examination. If the student does not take the make-up examination on the arranged date, a grade of "F" (score of zero) will be assigned.

If the student is absent from the final examination, a make-up examination must be scheduled within two days (to be determined by the instructor). If the student does not follow these guidelines, a grade of "F" (score of zero) will be assigned. If the student's cumulative course grade falls below a letter grade of "C" (less than 75%), the student will not pass the course and will not be eligible to advance in the nursing course sequence. Students are expected to refer to each course syllabus for specific policies related to tardiness and absence during examinations.

LATE SUBMISSION OF ASSIGNMENTS

All assignments outlined in the course syllabus and/or Canvas course website (including theory, clinical, and online assignments) must be completed and submitted by the specified deadlines. Meeting assignment deadlines is an important component of professional accountability and supports successful achievement of course learning objectives.

Failure to submit assignments by the designated date and time may affect the student's ability to meet course requirements, clinical objectives, and overall course performance. Policies regarding late assignments are determined by the instructor of record and are outlined in the individual course syllabus. The instructor may determine whether late assignments will be accepted and whether a grade reduction will apply. Failure to submit required assignments within the specified time frame may result in the student not

meeting course requirements and/or clinical objective criteria at a satisfactory level and may result in failure of the course.

ADN PROGRAM HONOR SYSTEM

As adult learners aspiring to become Registered Nurses, it is expected that all students in the ADN Program will conduct themselves with the honesty, integrity, and high moral standards ingrained in the discipline of nursing. They have a profound responsibility to themselves, the public, and the nursing profession. The honor system is based on personal honesty and trust and is an integral part of the ADN Program that every student is expected to uphold and support. Students are expected to be truthful at all times. Providing false or misleading information to faculty or administrators about oneself, instructors, patients, personal actions or behaviors, or the ADN Program or Merritt College constitutes a violation of honesty and trust. Such conduct may result in disqualification from the ADN Program.

Academic dishonesty (cheating) is cause for disqualification. Every nursing student must understand that the basis for this policy is the ADN Program and College's responsibility to protect the safety, well-being, and lives of patients and to safeguard the public. There is zero tolerance for cheating in the ADN Program. If the student is found cheating, they will receive a letter grade of "F" in the course and will be subject to recommendations from the Faculty Committee, which may include dismissal from the ADN Program for behavior which threatens the safety and well-being of patients.

Cheating includes, but is not limited to, assisting another student with answering exam questions, comparing or copying answers, or providing exam information to others. It also includes failing to submit the exam when time is called; engaging in any form of fraud or dishonesty; and using unauthorized materials, devices, or resources to obtain or verify answers. Accessing instructor-only online resources, such as test banks, or falsely claiming to be an instructor to obtain restricted materials is strictly prohibited. Referring to textbooks, eBooks, notes, online materials, supplemental resources, or receiving help from anyone during an exam is not allowed in any nursing course unless otherwise specified by the course instructor. The use of AI tools for assistance on any examinations or assignments (unless otherwise specified by the instructor) is also prohibited. Additionally, cheating includes impersonation, such as posing as a student, instructor, staff member, administrator, or clinical facility employee, whether online, in person, or in writing.

STUDENTS RESOURCES, SUPPORT SERVICES, AND LEADERSHIP

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

According to the California Code of Regulations (Title V), the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504), and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), students who are eligible for course adaptations or accommodations due to a documented learning, physical, or psychological disability will receive appropriate support. Instructors will make every

reasonable effort to provide accommodations for verified disabilities and/or special needs in accordance with applicable laws and regulations.

Students with documented disabilities who need accommodations are encouraged to meet with the instructor. Appointments may be scheduled via email and held in person or via Zoom. The *Services and Accommodations Form* provided by Student Accessibility Services (SAS) must be emailed to the instructor at least 24 hours before the appointment. All information will remain confidential in accordance with Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and will not affect the student's course grade. Students seeking support for a temporary or permanent condition, or who wish to be evaluated for a learning disability, should contact SAS by phone at 510-436-2429, via email at SAS.Merritt@peralta.edu, or in person in room R-109. Because appointments fill quickly, students should contact SAS as soon as possible.

The student has the right to request reasonable modifications to college requirements, services, facilities, or programs if their documented disability imposes an educational limitation or impedes access to such requirements, services, facilities, or programs. The student with a disability who requests a modification, accommodation, or adjustment is responsible for identifying themselves to the instructor and, if desired, to the SAS office. Students who consult or request assistance from SAS regarding specific modifications, accommodations, adjustments, or use of auxiliary aids will be required to meet timelines and procedural requirements established by the SAS office. Documentation for exam accommodations (e.g., extended time) must be emailed to the instructor at least one week prior to the scheduled exam dates.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE AND COST RESPONSIBILITIES

The Merritt College Financial Aid Office supports eligible students in accessing financial assistance resources. Students are encouraged to apply for financial aid early and maintain communication with the Financial Aid Office regarding application requirements, deadlines, and eligibility. Financial assistance may include grants, scholarships, loans, work-study opportunities, and other support programs designed to help students achieve their educational goals. The amount of financial aid awarded is based on availability of funds, demonstrated financial need, and academic performance.

Students enrolled in the ADN Program are responsible for all costs associated with program course and clinical requirements. These costs may include, but are not limited to textbooks and instructional materials, nursing uniforms and shoes, a stethoscope, watch and other required clinical supplies. Additional required expenses may include a physical examination, color vision screening, lab work, Basic Life Support (BLS) certification, criminal background check, drug screening, and N95 mask fit testing.

Additional expenses include transportation to and from the campus and assigned clinical agencies, including parking or public transportation fees. Students are also responsible for maintaining all required clinical clearances and certifications throughout the duration of the program, including any renewal costs incurred during enrollment.

MERRITT COLLEGE LIBRARY SERVICES

The Merritt College Library supports student learning and academic success by providing access to information resources, technology, and research support services. Nursing textbooks and reference materials are available in the library's stack collections and on reserve. Reserve materials may be checked out overnight or for weekend use when additional copies are available and with written approval from the instructor. The library also offers literacy instruction to help students develop skills in locating, evaluating, and using information effectively. Resources and services are available to support the diverse needs of the college community.

STUDENT LEADERSHIP

Each nursing cohort elects class officers and representatives who participate in program meetings and provide updates on class activities. Leadership positions include:

- President
- Vice President
- Secretary
- Treasurer
- Class Representative (2)

Class officers and representatives may attend student-faculty meetings, curriculum meetings, and program workshops. In these roles, students share general class updates, raise concerns, and participate in discussions related to curriculum, course matters, program issues, and other agenda topics. Students with concerns regarding the program or its policies may ask their class officers or representatives to meet with the Program Director or Program Assistant Director to request that the issue be placed on a faculty meeting agenda. Depending on the nature of the concern, the matter may be addressed on the agenda or referred to an appropriate faculty committee.

Concerns or complaints involving individual faculty members or specific courses must be brought to the attention of the Program Director or Assistant Program Director and will not be discussed at meetings or workshops unless this step has been completed.

CLINICAL LABORATORY PRACTICE: HOSPITAL OR OTHER CLINICAL AGENCY

CLINICAL EXPECTATIONS AND PLACEMENT

Peralta Community College District administrators and Merritt College Nursing faculty, under the direction of the CA BRN, place nursing students in clinical laboratory practice settings such as hospitals or other healthcare agencies under the professional supervision of qualified clinical instructors.

Clinical placement assignments are determined by nursing faculty along with the ADN Program Director based on course requirements and clinical agency availability. Once clinical placements have been assigned, changes or special accommodations will not be permitted. Students are expected to demonstrate professional conduct and active participation in all clinical learning experiences, including direct patient care activities and post-clinical conferences.

MEDICATION DOSAGE CALCULATION COMPETENCY EXAM

As a pre-clinical requirement, students must achieve a score of 100% on the Medication Dosage Calculation Competency Exams for Nursing 1, Nursing 3A, Nursing 3B, Nursing 4A, Nursing 4B, and Nursing 5 during clinical orientation to demonstrate mastery of medication dosage calculations prior to administering medications in the hospital clinical setting. Accurate dosage calculation in clinical practice is directly tied to patient safety. Therefore, the medication dosage exam is graded on a mastery basis. No calculation errors are permitted because medication errors pose significant risk to patient safety, which may result in serious harm and/or death. The ADN Program has adopted a zero-calculation error tolerance.

Students will not be allowed to administer medications in the clinical setting until competency is achieved. They will be allowed three attempts to achieve a score of 100%. These attempts must be completed within the timeframe designated by the instructor prior to when students will be required to administer medications in the clinical setting.

Students will be required to undergo a remediation process after the first and second unsuccessful attempts. This may include, but not be limited to, dosage calculation practice modules, ATI remediation resources, faculty-approved worksheet packets, tutoring sessions, and/or development of a written improvement plan. Student documentation of the completed remediation will be required.

If the student is unable to achieve 100% after three attempts, they will receive an Unsatisfactory grade (refer to Clinical Grading Terminology in the handbook) for clinical laboratory practice and not pass the course due to inability to meet clinical objective criteria and clinical safety requirements. As a result, the student will not be eligible to advance in the ADN Program course sequence. The student will be removed from the program and may submit a request for reinstatement in accordance with program policy.

CLINICAL PREPARATION

Students are responsible for completing all clinical preparation assignments designated by the instructor. These assignments may include, but are not limited to:

- eBook readings
- Online learning modules or assignments
- Skills and simulation laboratory practice

- Hospital pre-clinical preparation (pre-lab), which may include reviewing patient information in the electronic health record prior to the assigned clinical day

Completion of these preparatory activities is necessary to support safe and effective participation in clinical laboratory practice.

ESSENTIAL BEHAVIORS IN CLINICAL LABORATORY PRACTICE

Essential Behaviors are specific behavioral patterns that nursing students are expected to demonstrate consistently in all clinical learning environments, including hospitals, clinical agencies, and skills and simulation laboratories, throughout the duration of the nursing program. Demonstration of these behaviors supports the provision of safe, competent, and patient-centered nursing care.

Essential Behaviors are evaluated continuously throughout the course and are not limited to formal clinical performance evaluations. Students are expected to consistently demonstrate these behaviors during all clinical and skills/simulation laboratory experiences.

Essential Behaviors include:

- Communication
- Patient safety
- Patient comfort
- Organizational skills
- Asepsis
- Documentation

Failure to consistently demonstrate Essential Behaviors may affect the student's clinical performance evaluation and ability to meet clinical objective criteria. Unsafe or unprofessional behaviors that place patients, staff, instructors, or other students at risk may result in immediate instructor intervention, removal from the clinical setting, and/or an Unsatisfactory clinical evaluation.

COMMUNICATION

Communication is a dynamic, interactive process, consisting of a network of messages sent and received in short and long interchanges.

- Therapeutic communication is student behavior which facilitates the initiation, maintenance, and termination of an effective nurse-patient relationship, and promotes the growth and application of the nursing process and improvement of patient care.
- Staff communication is student behavior which demonstrates clear, concise, and accurate communication with healthcare team members.
- Instructor communication is student behavior which demonstrates clear, concise, and accurate communication with the nursing instructor.

PATIENT SAFETY

Patient safety is the condition of being safe and protected from harm, injury, or loss. The student is expected to practice preventive safety measures to ensure that the patient is free from physical and psychological harm.

The following are examples of student behaviors that may cause a patient to be physically injured or hurt:

- Using poor body mechanics, physically mishandling patients, or misusing patient restraints
- Failing to use side rails and other protective devices as indicated for the patient
- Failing to properly identify patients when administering medications or performing procedures, or improperly administering medications or performing procedures

The following are examples of student behaviors that may cause a patient to be psychologically injured or hurt:

- Denying patient and family access to healthcare team members who are able to provide information and explanations relevant to the patient's diagnosis
- Failure to adequately explain a therapeutic procedure to a patient
- Failure to respect and incorporate cultural beliefs and practices into nursing care which have been identified as important to a client's well-being
- Infringement of a patient's right to privacy and confidentiality

PATIENT COMFORT

Comfort is a sense of well-being, or freedom from pain or an irritant. Comfort is a second-level need in Maslow's hierarchy of needs, following primary needs such as respiration and circulation.

The following are examples of student behaviors that provide physical comfort:

- Keeping a patient free from irritants
- Maintaining a patient's position of comfort and proper alignment
- Maintaining a pleasant environment for the patient
- Providing measures to relieve discomfort and pain in the patient

The following are examples of student behaviors that provide psychological comfort:

- Accepting a patient as a unique individual in a non-judgmental way
- Listening actively and providing emotional support to a patient

ORGANIZATIONAL SKILLS

Organization is the process of functioning in an orderly and timely manner. Organizational skills are those student behaviors that reflect application of the nursing process: assessment, diagnosis, planning, implementation, and evaluation (including modification of the evaluation).

The following are examples of student behaviors that demonstrate organizational skills:

- Setting appropriate patient health goals and priorities
- Providing timely, systematic, and effective patient care

ASEPSIS

Asepsis is the state of being free of pathogens or disease-causing microorganisms. Medical asepsis reduces the number of microorganisms present and prevents their transmission.

The following are examples of student behaviors that require medical asepsis:

- Handwashing
- Administration of medications

Surgical asepsis keeps objects and areas free from all microorganisms.

The following are examples of student behaviors that require surgical asepsis:

- Insertion of straight and indwelling urinary catheters
- Sterile dressing change

DOCUMENTATION

Documentation is a process of recording patient information and care.

The following is an example of student behavior that demonstrates nursing documentation:

- Recording patient care data using acceptable medical terminology in an accurate and timely manner in the electronic health record

CLINICAL EVALUATION CRITERIA

All nursing courses with a clinical component (Nursing 1, Nursing 3A, Nursing 3B, Nursing 4A, Nursing 4B, and Nursing 5) utilize a standardized *Clinical Evaluation Tool*.

The clinical instructor evaluates student performance based on the student's ability to meet clinical objective criteria in the following areas:

- Application of scientific principles
- Patient assessment
- Communication, including documentation

- Performance of clinical procedures
- Medication calculation and administration
- Application of principles of growth and development across the lifespan
- Professional attitude and behavior

CLINICAL GRADING

The ADN Program uses a **Satisfactory (Pass) or Unsatisfactory (No Pass)** grading system for clinical laboratory practice. This method provides a standardized approach to clinical evaluation across courses and instructors, supporting the development of safe and competent nursing practice. The student must consistently demonstrate satisfactory performance in all clinical objective areas in order to remain in the clinical setting. **To successfully complete the course and progress in the ADN Program nursing course sequence, the student must earn a Satisfactory grade in clinical laboratory practice. Students who receive an Unsatisfactory clinical evaluation will not pass the course and will not progress in the ADN Program nursing course sequence.**

CLINICAL GRADING TERMINOLOGY

The clinical grading system terminology is defined as follows:

Satisfactory (S):
The student consistently demonstrates safe and effective clinical performance and meets all clinical objectives outlined in the *Clinical Evaluation Tool*. The student performs clinical skills competently, applies theoretical knowledge to patient care, and demonstrates professional behavior in the clinical setting.

Unsatisfactory (U):
The student does not consistently demonstrate safe and effective clinical performance and/or fails to meet clinical objectives outlined in the *Clinical Evaluation Tool*. An Unsatisfactory clinical evaluation results in failure of the clinical component and course.

CLINICAL EVALUATION PROCESS

Student performance in the clinical setting is evaluated by the clinical instructor through both verbal and written feedback.

MIDTERM EVALUATION

A midterm clinical evaluation is conducted approximately halfway through the clinical rotation. The purpose of the midterm evaluation is to assess student progress, identify areas for improvement, and establish strategies to support successful clinical performance. Student performance is evaluated using the following ratings:

- Satisfactory
- Needs Improvement
- Unsatisfactory

FINAL EVALUATION

A final clinical evaluation is conducted toward the end of the clinical rotation. The purpose of the final evaluation is to determine the student's overall ability to consistently meet clinical objectives, demonstrate Essential Behaviors, and complete required clinical assignments. The expectation is that the student has provided safe and competent patient care throughout the clinical experience.

Student performance is evaluated using the following ratings:

- Satisfactory
- Unsatisfactory
- Satisfactory with Clinical Improvement Action Plan

ONGOING CLINICAL FEEDBACK

Students will receive regular feedback from the clinical instructor throughout the clinical experience. If a student does not meet the clinical objectives at a satisfactory level, the clinical instructor will counsel the student and may implement a *Clinical Improvement Action Plan* at any time to facilitate improvement and support student success (refer to the *Clinical Improvement Action Plan* section of this handbook for additional information). Students are expected to take an active role in their learning by preparing for clinical experiences, incorporating instructor feedback, and demonstrating progressive development of clinical competence.

STUDENT SELF-EVALUATION

Students are required to complete written self-evaluations using the *Clinical Evaluation Tool* for both the midterm and final clinical evaluations. Students must also participate in individual evaluation conferences with the clinical instructor to review their clinical performance. The final clinical evaluation is contingent upon satisfactory completion of all clinical objectives, Essential Behaviors, and required clinical assignments.

UNSAFE BEHAVIOR & PATIENT ENDANGERMENT IN THE CLINICAL SETTING

EXPECTATION OF SAFE PRACTICE

Students are expected to demonstrate safe clinical performance at all times. Patient safety is the highest priority in all clinical activities.

DEFINITION OF UNSAFE BEHAVIOR

Unsafe behavior includes any action or failure to act that:

- Falls below the acceptable standard of care
- Places a patient's health, safety, or well-being at risk
- Violates clinical agency policies or ADN Program policies
- Exceeds the scope of safe student nursing practice

SUPERVISION AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Students provide care under the direct supervision of a clinical instructor and are accountable to that instructor for all clinical actions and decisions.

IMMEDIATE REMOVAL FROM CLINICAL SETTING

If unsafe clinical behavior occurs, even as a single incident:

- The clinical instructor has the authority to immediately remove the student from the clinical setting.
- Removal is based on the instructor's professional judgment to protect patient safety.

ACADEMIC CONSEQUENCES

Unsafe clinical behavior will result in:

- An Unsatisfactory (U) clinical grade
- Failure of the course
- Dismissal from the ADN Program

READMISSION POLICY

- Students dismissed for unsafe behavior or patient endangerment are not eligible for readmission unless program-defined remediation criteria are met.
- In cases involving impairment (e.g., alcohol, drugs, or mental health concerns), students must provide documented evidence of appropriate treatment or rehabilitation.
- All readmission requests are reviewed according to the ADN Program Readmission Policy and Procedure.

A student who exhibits behavior suggestive of impairment due to alcohol, marijuana/cannabis, illegal drugs, prescription or over-the-counter medications, or a medical condition may be immediately removed from the clinical setting if the behavior is determined to compromise, or potentially compromise, patient safety or the student's ability to provide safe and effective care.

In cases where the student's performance results in unsafe nursing practice or patient endangerment, the student may be dismissed from the ADN Program. Students dismissed under these circumstances will not be eligible for readmission unless there is documented evidence that appropriate treatment or rehabilitation has occurred. Any request for readmission will be considered in accordance with the ADN Program Readmission Policy and Procedure.

REMOVAL OF A STUDENT BY A HOSPITAL OR CLINICAL AGENCY

Students must comply with the policies, procedures, and standards of care established by the hospital or clinical agency where they complete their clinical laboratory practice experiences. If a clinical agency determines that a student has violated its policies, procedures, or standards of care, the agency may require the student to leave the clinical area. In such cases, the clinical instructor will direct the student to leave the facility immediately and will notify the ADN Program Director.

The clinical instructor will review the circumstances related to the student's removal. In consultation with the Program Director, a determination will be made regarding appropriate action, which may include dismissal from the ADN Program.

REMOVAL OF A STUDENT BY A CLINICAL INSTRUCTOR

Clinical instructors in the ADN Program have the responsibility and authority to assess, evaluate, and determine the clinical performance of students based on the standards established by the program. These standards are defined in each course's *Clinical Evaluation Tool* and the program's Essential Behaviors.

If a student's performance does not meet established clinical standards, the clinical instructor may remove the student from the clinical laboratory practice setting. The instructor will review the circumstances and document the incident in accordance with program policies and procedures.

Clinical instructors have the responsibility and authority to remove a student from the clinical laboratory practice setting and recommend dismissal from the ADN Program for cause. Cause is defined as a student's clinical performance falling below the acceptable standard of care, as outlined in the program objectives and evaluation criteria, and posing a significant risk to patient safety or well-being, as determined by the instructor's professional judgment.

In circumstances involving immediate concerns related to patient safety, professional conduct, or clinical performance, the clinical instructor may remove a student from the clinical setting without prior written notice. The student will be provided with a verbal explanation of the reasons for the removal, followed by written notification within three business days of the incident.

When prior counseling and remediation efforts have not resulted in sufficient improvement and the student's clinical performance presents a substantial, though not immediate, risk to patient safety, the clinical instructor may remove the student from the clinical setting and provide written notice of the intent to recommend dismissal from the program.

INTENT TO DISMISS A STUDENT FROM THE ADN PROGRAM

This policy applies when a student's clinical performance is determined to be Unsatisfactory and presents a substantial, though not immediate, risk to patient safety. If a clinical instructor removes the student from the clinical setting, the Program Director will be notified and a meeting will be scheduled with the student to review the circumstances and determine appropriate next steps. Prior to the meeting, the clinical instructor will prepare a written statement (*Notice of Intent to Dismiss*) to be discussed with the student and Program Director. The *Notice of Intent to Dismiss* will describe the circumstances that led to the student's removal, the reasons for the proposed dismissal, and a summary of any prior counseling provided to the student and the student's response to that counseling. The notice will be provided to the student in person or via email.

If, in the professional judgment of the clinical instructor, the student has violated college, program, course, or clinical agency policies, the applicable college or program disciplinary procedures will be followed.

If the clinical instructor determines that the student's performance does not fall below the acceptable standard of care established by program and course objectives and does not warrant dismissal, the ADN Program will make a good-faith effort to secure an alternative clinical placement at an affiliated clinical agency to allow the student to complete the course and clinical requirements. If an alternative clinical placement cannot be secured, the student may be placed on a leave of absence in accordance with program policies. Although the program may assist in identifying an equivalent clinical placement or educational alternative, it cannot guarantee the availability of an alternate placement.

STUDENT APPEAL OF DISMISSAL FOR CLINICAL PERFORMANCE

Upon receiving a *Notice of Intent to Dismiss*, the student may appeal through the Peralta Community College District (PCCD) Student Academic Grievance Hearing Procedure. The Student Grievance Procedure provides students with a prompt and equitable process for resolving concerns related to their academic status, rights, or privileges as students. Applicable grievances include academic grade disputes involving a mistake, fraud, bad faith, or incompetence; violations of students' rights to free expression; and violations of applicable laws, policies, or procedures. Additional information is provided in the Student Rights, Concerns, and Grievance Procedures section of this handbook.

CLINICAL IMPROVEMENT ACTION PLAN

During the midterm clinical evaluation, the clinical instructor may place a student on a *Clinical Improvement Action Plan* to notify the student of specific clinical objective areas requiring improvement. These areas are identified in the course *Clinical Evaluation Tool* and Essential Behaviors and are intended to provide the student with an opportunity to improve performance prior to the final clinical evaluation.

If, by the end of the clinical rotation, the student meets minimum clinical performance standards but continues to require improvement or greater consistency in one or more

clinical objectives, the student may continue to need the *Clinical Improvement Action Plan*. This status is not considered an Unsatisfactory (No Pass) grade, and the student may progress to subsequent courses and clinical rotations in the ADN Program sequence. The *Clinical Improvement Action Plan* requires continued monitoring and evaluation of the student's performance related to the identified clinical objectives by the subsequent clinical instructor.

Before beginning the next clinical rotation, the student must meet with the instructor who issued the *Clinical Improvement Action Plan* and the instructor for the upcoming clinical rotation to discuss expectations for improvement. Failure to attend this meeting or to comply with the terms of the *Clinical Improvement Action Plan* during the subsequent clinical rotation may result in immediate removal from the clinical setting for performance that jeopardizes patient safety or fails to meet program Essential Behaviors. In such cases, the student will receive an Unsatisfactory clinical grade, will not pass the associated course, and will be dismissed from the ADN Program. A student may be placed on the *Clinical Improvement Action Plan* only once during enrollment in the ADN Program.

PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT AND EXPECTATIONS

MERRITT COLLEGE ADN PROGRAM CODE OF CONDUCT

All students enrolled in the ADN Program are required to strictly follow the Code of Conduct. Due to the professional nature of the program, students preparing to enter the healthcare field must consistently demonstrate behavior aligned with the standards of a professional nurse. Accordingly, students are expected to conduct themselves professionally at all times in classrooms, skills/simulation laboratories, computer laboratory, affiliated hospitals and clinical facilities, and Allied Health and instructors' offices. Students must demonstrate courteous and respectful behavior in all interactions with students, faculty, staff, and administrators; hospital and clinical facility staff; and other healthcare team members, patients, and visitors, recognizing and honoring the rights and responsibilities of others.

Students are required to comply with all rules and regulations of the Peralta Community College District, Merritt College, the Allied Health Division, and the ADN Program. This includes policies governing individual nursing courses, nursing faculty, affiliated hospitals and clinical agencies, the skills/simulation laboratory, and the computer laboratory. Failure to comply with the ADN Program Code of Conduct may result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal from the program.

Students must also adhere to all institutional and program standards throughout their enrollment. Violations related to professional conduct, academic integrity, patient safety and confidentiality, and legal and ethical compliance that may result in disciplinary action and failure of a nursing course include, but are not limited to:

- Theft of property belonging to Merritt College or affiliated hospitals/clinical agencies.
- Violation of patient/client confidentiality, including breaches of HIPAA regulations.

- Leaving the hospital/clinical agency or simulation lab early without instructor permission or without properly reporting off to the instructor; and being present on hospital units without the instructor and outside scheduled clinical time.
- Cheating, plagiarism, and misuse of documents or data, including: passing off someone else's work as one's own, submitting assignments that are very similar or nearly identical to another student's work (including past students), transcribing exam questions or taking photos of exams, using AI to write nursing care plans or other assignment (AI may be used only for grammar and spelling support), getting help from outside sources (peers, notes, online materials) during exams, altering or misusing hospital/college documents, records, equipment, or computer data.
- Video or audio recording class sessions without explicit instructor permission.
- Using electronic devices to record or collect patient medical information; removing or using patient information (from handwritten notes, hospital computers, or electronic systems) outside the clinical facility; photocopying or taking pictures of any part of a patient's chart; photographing documents containing a patient's personal or private health information; posting patients on social media or public platforms.
- Discussing classroom, clinical, or laboratory experiences in any public domain, including social media (public or private accounts), online forums, group chats, blogs, websites, or any internet-based platform. This applies even if the student does not mention patient names, thinks the account is "private," and does not identify the hospital or instructor.
- Video or audio recording an instructor, taking pictures of an instructor, and/or posting an instructor on social media or public platforms without explicit instructor permission (knowledge and consent).
- Sharing, distributing, or misusing lecture recordings that have been approved for personal educational use only as accommodations due to a documented disability through Student Accessibility Services.
- Verbal insults, physical aggression, threats, profanity directed at others, ethnic or racial slurs, or any unprofessional interactions with students, faculty, staff, patients, or visitors in classrooms, clinical facilities, nursing skills/simulation labs, ADN Program offices, or anywhere on the Merritt College campus.
- Any verbal or physical behavior that interferes with teaching, learning, patient/client care, program administration. This may include arguing loudly during class, refusing instructor direction in clinical, creating a hostile learning environment, interfering with patient care activities.
- Providing false, misleading, or altered information or documents to the ADN Program, Program Director, Assistant Director, instructors, or any affiliated hospital or clinical agency.

- Communicating directly with employees or administrators of an affiliated hospital/clinical agency without instructor approval. This includes, but is not limited to, requests to use copy machines, telephones, medical equipment and supplies; hospital parking; or other special services or privileges.
- Making false or misleading accusations against another student, faculty member, the Program Director, or staff in writing, by telephone, online (including email or social media), or through anonymous communications.
- Violation of the ADN Program Dress Code and Personal Hygiene Policy.
- Violation of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA).
- Violation of the ADN Program Background Check Policy.
- Violation of the ADN Program Substance Abuse and Drug Screening Policy.

SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND DRUG SCREENING POLICY

The ADN Program is committed to maintaining a safe, healthy, and professional learning environment that protects patients, students, faculty, staff, and clinical partners. Students are expected to demonstrate sound judgment, professional behavior, and the ability to provide safe patient care at all times.

The use, possession, distribution, sale, or being under the influence of alcohol, marijuana/cannabis, illegal drugs, or the misuse of prescribed or over-the-counter medications while participating in any ADN Program activity is strictly prohibited. This policy applies to all classrooms, skills lab, simulation lab, clinical agencies, campus facilities, and any program-related activity.

Students may not participate in clinical or academic activities while impaired by alcohol, marijuana/cannabis (including edibles), illegal substances, prescribed medications, or medical conditions that affect judgment, coordination, cognition, communication, or the ability to provide safe patience care.

DRUG SCREENING REQUIREMENTS

All students enrolled in the ADN Program are required to comply with drug screening requirements established by the program and affiliated clinical agencies.

Drug screening is required:

- Prior to admission or participation in clinical experiences
- As required by clinical agencies throughout the duration of the program
- When there is reasonable suspicion of impairment
- Following behavior or incidents involving unsafe clinical practice or patient endangerment

Students are responsible for all costs associated with required drug screenings. Drug screenings must be completed within the deadlines specified by the ADN Program and/or the assigned clinical agency.

REASONABLE SUSPICION AND REMOVAL FROM CLINICAL

A student whose appearance, behavior, speech, judgment, motor skills, or performance suggests possible impairment may be immediately removed from the clinical or academic setting by faculty, ADN Program Director, ADN Program Assistant Director, or Division Dean.

Examples of behaviors that may indicate impairment include, but are not limited to:

- Confusion or inability to follow directions
- Slurred speech or unsteady gait
- Inappropriate, erratic, or aggressive behavior
- Odor of alcohol or drugs
- Excessive drowsiness or inability to remain alert
- Unsafe clinical judgment or patience care errors
- Possession of alcohol or unauthorized substances in a clinical or educational setting

The student will be informed of the reason for removal by the clinical instructor and may not return to clinical activities until authorized in writing by ADN Program administration.

UNSAFE CLINICAL PERFORMANCE RELATED TO IMPAIRMENT

Patient safety during the clinical experience is the highest priority of the ADN Program. If, in the professional judgment of the clinical instructor, a student's behavior places or potentially places a patient, peer, instructor, or staff member at risk, the student may be subject to immediate disciplinary action, including dismissal from the program. Students demonstrating unsafe clinical performance related to suspected impairment may be referred for immediate drug screening, which must be completed within the timeframe designated by the program. Refusal to submit to required drug screening will be treated as noncompliance with program policy and may result in dismissal from the ADN Program.

POSITIVE DRUG SCREENING RESULTS

A positive drug screening will result in removal from clinical placement and may result in dismissal from the ADN Program in accordance with program and college policies. Students seeking readmission following a positive drug screening may be required to:

1. Provide evidence of a negative drug screening.
2. Submit documentation of successful treatment or rehabilitation.
3. Meet with the ADN Program Director, ADN Program Assistant Director, Division Dean, and faculty for review.

4. Comply with an individualized remediation or monitoring plan.
5. Consent to periodic or random drug screening upon readmission.

In this circumstance, readmission is not guaranteed and is subject to approval by the nursing faculty and availability of clinical placement.

NEGATIVE DRUG SCREENING RESULTS

If drug screening results are negative, the student may be required to provide medical documentation from a licensed healthcare provider verifying that a medical condition or prescribed medication does not impair the student's ability to safely participate in clinical and academic activities. The ADN Program reserves the right to require medical clearance before permitting the student to return to a clinical experience.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITY AND PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

Students are responsible for monitoring their physical and mental condition and for reporting any medication use, medical condition, or circumstance that may impair safe performance or clinical judgment. Students must notify their clinical instructor or ADN Program administration if they are taking medications or experiencing conditions that could interfere with safe participation in classroom, skills laboratory, simulation laboratory, or clinical activities. Failure to comply with this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including removal from clinical placement, course failure, or dismissal from the ADN Program.

ADN PROGRAM DRESS CODE & PERSONAL HYGIENE POLICY

CLASSROOM, CLINICAL AGENCY, AND SKILLS/SIMULATION LABORATORY

Students in the ADN Program are expected to maintain a professional, clean, and well-groomed appearance in the classroom, clinical agency, and skills and simulation laboratories. Students are required to wear the specific uniform designated by the ADN Program. Each student is responsible for purchasing sufficient uniforms to ensure that a clean uniform is worn for each clinical day.

Students are expected to adhere to professional standards of dress and grooming appropriate for health care environments. Clothing, accessories, and grooming practices that are extreme or inconsistent with professional standards in clinical settings should be avoided. Students are expected to exercise sound judgment in maintaining appropriate attire in the interest of professionalism, patient comfort, and personal safety.

All students must comply with the ADN Program Dress Code & Personal Hygiene Policy. Failure to adhere to this policy may result in dismissal from the clinical agency for the day and may affect the student's ability to meet clinical course requirements and progress in the ADN Program. The ADN Program Dress Code & Personal Hygiene Policy Agreement is located in Appendix F of this handbook.

DRESS CODE & PERSONAL HYGIENE POLICY

NURSING 1, NURSING 3A, NURSING 3B, NURSING 4A, AND NURSING 5

- Royal blue student uniform (scrub top and pants) must be clean, intact, and wrinkle-free.
- Black socks and black shoes must be clean and intact.
- The hospital-issued identification badge must be worn on the uniform top and clearly visible.
- The ADN Program patch must be displayed in the center of the left outer sleeve of the uniform top.
- The nursing uniform may be purchased at https://www.walmart.com/ip/Medgear-Scrubs-for-Men-and-Women-Scrubs-Set-Medical-Uniform-Black-X-Large/178720394. Students are strongly encouraged to purchase two sets of uniforms, as the uniform is required for classroom activities, clinical practice experiences at hospitals and other clinical agencies, and skills and simulation laboratory sessions.

NURSING 4B (PSYCHIATRIC NURSING)

- The standard student uniform will not be worn unless otherwise directed by the clinical instructor.
- Loose-fitting, clean, and intact professional street clothing that is free of slogans and safe for a psychiatric setting must be worn. Denim, sweatpants, leggings/tights, and gym attire are not permitted.
- Black socks and black shoes must be clean and intact.
- The hospital-issued and/or student identification badge (as directed by the instructor) must be worn above the waist and clearly visible (last name should be covered).

CLASSROOM AND SKILLS/SIMULATION LABORATORIES

- Royal blue uniform (scrub top and pants) must be clean, intact, and wrinkle-free.
- Black socks and black shoes must be clean and intact.
- The ADN Program patch must be displayed in the center of the left outer sleeve of the uniform top.

SHOES

- Black leather nursing or athletic shoes with minimal walking noise are required.
- Shoes must be completely black, including logos and soles.
- Canvas or cloth athletic shoes, clogs, boots, sandals, and Crocs are not permitted.

JEWELRY

- A wristwatch must be worn for use during patient assessments.

- Jewelry should be minimal in the interest of professional appearance and personal safety.
- One small ring and single stud earrings are permitted. Ear gauges/plugs, ear weights, and ear tunnels are not permitted.
- No additional rings or visible body piercings are allowed.

TATTOOS AND BODY ART

- Tattoos and body art should be covered during all clinical laboratory practice experiences.
- A royal blue long-sleeve shirt may be worn under the uniform top to cover arm tattoos.
- Students must also follow any additional guidelines established by the clinical agency or instructor.

HAIR

- Hair must be clean and neatly styled.
- Long hair must be secured away from the face and shoulders.
- Ponytails, buns, and braids are acceptable.
- Facial hair must be neatly trimmed and maintained to allow proper use of surgical masks or other personal protective equipment.

FINGERNAILS

- Nails must be kept short and clean.
- Nail polish, gel polish, acrylic nails, artificial nails, and nail tips are prohibited in accordance with clinical agency infection-control guidelines.

PERSONAL HYGIENE

- Neutral body odor and fresh breath must be maintained. Odors such as smoke, tobacco, and marijuana are not acceptable.
- Perfumes, scented lotions, and strongly fragranced deodorants are prohibited, as they may trigger allergic or respiratory reactions in patients.

Students who arrive at the clinical agency, skills lab, or simulation lab out of compliance with the Dress Code and Personal Hygiene Policy may be dismissed for the day at the discretion of the clinical instructor. Any missed clinical and laboratory time must be made up in accordance with course and program policies to meet clinical laboratory practice requirements.

HAND HYGIENE POLICY

Hand hygiene is the single most effective method for preventing healthcare-associated infections. Proper handwashing reduces the transmission of potential pathogens and decreases patient morbidity and mortality from healthcare-associated infections. Artificial nails and nail tips are more likely than natural nails to harbor microorganisms that can contribute to the spread of infection.

The ADN Program has adopted the following mandatory hand hygiene policy for all students participating in clinical laboratory practice experiences.

Students must perform hand hygiene at the following times when in the clinical laboratory practice setting:

- At the start of the clinical day upon arrival to the hospital unit or clinical agency
- Before and after direct contact with patients
- Before and after contact with blood, body fluids, mucous membranes, non-intact skin, or contaminated items
- Before and after leaving a patient's room
- Before eating or drinking
- After coughing or sneezing
- After using the restroom
- After removing gloves

The type of hand hygiene performed (plain soap and water, antimicrobial soap, alcohol-based hand sanitizer, or surgical hand antisepsis) should be determined by the degree of hand contamination and clinical circumstances. Soap from wall-mounted dispensers must be used for routine handwashing. Bar soap is not permitted in clinical settings.

Students must follow the ADN Program Hand Hygiene Policy. This policy should be followed in addition to, and not as a substitute for, the specific hand hygiene policies and procedures of the clinical agency to which they are assigned. Students who fail to comply with this policy will be removed immediately from the clinical laboratory setting until compliance is achieved. The student will receive an Unsatisfactory clinical evaluation for the period of time missed due to noncompliance.

STANDARD PRECAUTIONS

The ADN Program follows accepted standards of care related to Standard Precautions during clinical laboratory practice in hospitals or clinical agencies and in the skills and simulation laboratories. As in professional nursing practice, students must use precautions with all blood and body fluids to protect themselves and others from potential exposure to infectious organisms.

Students are required to adhere to the following practices:

- Treat the blood and body fluids of all patients as potentially infectious.
- Wash hands before and after all patient and specimen contact.
- Wear gloves when contact with blood or body fluids is possible.
- Wear gowns when splashing or exposure to blood or body fluids is anticipated.
- Wear masks when caring for patients with tuberculosis (TB) or other respiratory organisms.
- Wear protective eyewear and masks when splashing of blood or body fluids may occur (e.g., bronchoscopy, oral procedures, birthing process).
- Dispose of used syringes immediately in designated sharps container. Do not recap or manipulate needles.
- Treat all linen soiled with blood or body secretions as infectious.
- Handle and process all laboratory specimens as potentially infectious.
- Ensure resuscitation equipment is readily available when respiratory arrest is possible.

Before a student is assigned to care for a patient with a known infectious disease, the student must first demonstrate competence in Universal Precautions and isolation techniques under the supervision of the clinical instructor.

MERRITT ADN PROGRAM DEPARTMENTAL COMMUNICATION WITH STUDENTS

To maintain an effective communication network, all students are required to keep a current telephone number and email address on file with the ADN Program Allied Health Office. Clinical agencies affiliated with the ADN Program also require current contact information for students assigned to clinical laboratory practice at their facilities. Students must consent to the release of this information to affiliated clinical agencies as a condition of clinical placement.

Multiple avenues of communication are available to students to ensure timely dissemination of program information and to facilitate prompt response to ADN Program communications. These include:

- Class Representation: Each cohort elects class officers and representatives during the first semester of the program to attend faculty meetings, communicate regularly with faculty and administration, and share student questions, concerns, and feedback. Each cohort holds regular class meetings led by class officers. In addition, class officers or representatives may disseminate written updates and share

information with their cohort through approved electronic communication platforms, such as group messaging or group chat applications.

- Posted Announcements: ADN Program announcements are posted regularly in designated student communication areas and through approved program communication platforms.
- Electronic Communication: Official program communication is conducted primarily through Merritt College email. Students are required to maintain an active Merritt College email account and check it regularly to ensure timely receipt of important program information.
- Merritt College Website: Admission requirements, course descriptions, application procedures, and program policies are available in the ADN Program section of the Merritt College website. The website also offers access to student resources such as academic support services, counseling, financial aid information, and links to program handbooks and important program announcements.
- The ADN Program does not use Facebook, Instagram, Twitter/X, Discord, or any other social media platform as an official means of communication with students.

STUDENT RIGHTS, CONCERNS, AND GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

STUDENT CONCERNS ABOUT A FACULTY MEMBER OR NURSING COURSE

If an individual student or a group of students have a problem or complaint about a faculty member or course requirements, it should be discussed with the faculty member, course coordinator, and/or Program Director. To protect student privacy and maintain compliance with FERPA, issues related to a student's academic or clinical performance may be discussed only with the student and appropriate college personnel who have a legitimate educational interest, as permitted by law and college policy. Concerns or complaints regarding an academic grade should be brought directly to the instructor who issued the grade. By law, the grade given by the instructor is final and cannot be changed, unless there was a mistake, fraud, bad faith, or incompetence. The student has the burden of proving a mistake, fraud, bad faith, or incompetence. Students who make false allegations will be subject to the ADN Program’s Code of Conduct.

STUDENT CONCERNS DIRECTED TO THE FACULTY COMMITTEE

The Faculty Committee serves as a supportive resource for addressing student concerns within the ADN Program. The committee promotes open communication and collaboration between students and faculty while fostering a respectful and inclusive learning environment. Through open dialogue, information sharing, and student engagement, the committee supports student well-being and encourages professional development. The

committee also helps ensure that student perspectives are heard and considered in program-related matters.

GRADE CHANGES AND STUDENT GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

The Peralta Community College District uses the Board Policy and Administrative Procedure Service provided by the Community College League of California (CCLC). CCLC provides updates biannually in the fall and spring to ensure that board policies and administrative procedures reflect currency in state and federal statutes and regulations as well as accreditation standards.

The Board Policy and Administrative Procedure addressing Grade Changes and Student Grievance Procedure (*PCCD AP 4231*) can be found on the Peralta Community College District website at:

https://www.peralta.edu/hubfs/Peralta%202021/Pdf/trustees/A-Academic%20Affairs/AP-4231-Grade-Changes-and-Student-Grievance-Procedure.pdf

GROUNDS FOR GRADE DETERMINATION IN THE MERRITT COLLEGE ADN PROGRAM

Course and clinical grades are assigned by the instructor of record and are considered final. Grades may only be changed in cases of fraud, mistake, bad faith, or incompetence, as defined by District policy. Grades cannot be changed due to reassessment of performance or submission of additional work after final grades are issued (except for resolution of an assigned “Incomplete” course grade). Requests for grade changes must occur within two years of the original grade assignment.

THEORY AND CLINICAL GRADING

Both theory and clinical performance are required for successful course completion in the ADN Program. Clinical evaluations are subject to the same review standards as academic grades and may only be changed only when there is evidence of error or misconduct.

STUDENT GRIEVANCES

GROUNDS FOR GRIEVANCE

Students who believe they have been treated unfairly in the ADN Program may initiate a grievance regarding:

- A grade dispute involving a mistake, fraud, bad faith, or incompetence in the evaluation of student performance
- An alleged violation of student rights, program policy, or college policy
- Concerns related to unfair or unsafe learning environments (excluding matters addressed under separate discrimination, harassment, or Title IX procedures)

A grievance may be filed against a student, faculty member, administrator, or classified staff member. The burden of proof rests with the student to demonstrate that a grievance is

warranted. Unsafe clinical performance, academic dishonesty, or violations of program standards are not subject to appeal unless there is evidence of a procedural error, a mistake, fraud, bad faith, or incompetence in the evaluation process. Because nursing education involves patient safety and clinical judgement, faculty evaluation is afforded substantial weight.

INFORMAL RESOLUTION

Students are encouraged to seek an informal resolution within 30 calendar days by discussing the concern with the appropriate faculty member, staff member, supervisor, or administrator.

FORMAL GRIEVANCE PROCESS

If the matter cannot be resolved informally, a formal grievance may be filed with the Executive Vice President of Student Learning and Success (or designee) within 90 days of the incident or when the student became aware of the issue. Formal grievances are reviewed in accordance with *Peralta Community College District Administrative Procedure 4231 (Grade Changes and Student Grievance Procedure*), which outlines grievance hearing procedures, due process protections, confidentiality requirements, representation rights, and appeal procedures.

For academic (grade) grievances, a grade change may be granted only upon a finding of a mistake, fraud, bad faith, or incompetence in the evaluation of student performance.

For the complete grievance procedure, refer to Peralta Community College District Administrative Procedure 4231.

INSTRUCTIONAL AND PROGRAM CHANGES IN RESPONSE TO EMERGENCY AND UNFORESEEN CIRCUMSTANCES

In the event of a pandemic, natural disaster, or any other circumstances beyond the College's control, changes to the theory and clinical components of nursing courses may be required. Such changes will be implemented in accordance with guidance from the CA BRN and California Governor's Office. Faculty and administration of the ADN Program will notify nursing students of any required adjustments to course delivery or clinical rotations.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A:
COLLEGE AND PROGRAM CEREMONIES

GENERAL GUIDELINES & INFORMATION FOR PINNING CEREMONY

- Nursing graduate attire for the pinning ceremony must be approved in advance by the Faculty Class Advisor, Nursing faculty, and Program Director during the early part of the Spring semester of the graduation year. Previously approved attire has included the school uniform, a white lab coat worn over black professional semi-formal attire, or a white lab coat worn over professional semi-formal attire in any color.
- The pinning ceremony invitation and program must be approved by the Faculty Class Advisor, Nursing faculty, and Program Director prior to print or electronic distribution (see sample invitation and program materials below).
- The pinning ceremony music and other audio-visual media (e.g., slideshow), if used, must be approved by the Faculty Class Advisor, Nursing faculty, and Program Director.
- The student class officers and/or class representatives must contact Merritt College Facilities at merfacilities@peralta.edu or (510) 434-3967 if an on-campus room reservation (e.g. Huey P. Newton Student Lounge) is desired for the location of the pinning ceremony. The maximum number of guests must be approved by Merritt College Facilities and must comply with room occupancy restrictions.
- The student class officers and/or class representatives must contact Merritt College IT at merritthelpdesk@peralta.edu to coordinate any audio-visual needs or media plans for use during the pinning ceremony and to request IT support during the pinning ceremony rehearsal.
- The pinning ceremony rehearsal should be scheduled no more than three days prior to the ceremony. Scheduling the rehearsal the day before the ceremony is often ideal as it allows time for room setup and decorations if the event is held on campus. All students participating in the pinning ceremony are strongly encouraged to attend the rehearsal.
- All students participating in the pinning ceremony must use the designated ADN Program nursing pin and candle lamp/holder. Information regarding these items will be provided by the Faculty Class Advisor, Program Specialist, or Program Director.
- The student speaker must submit the final draft of their speech at least one week prior to the ceremony for review and approval by the Faculty Class Advisor and ADN Program Director.
- Graduating students may invite up to two loved ones to participate in the pinning portion of the ceremony.

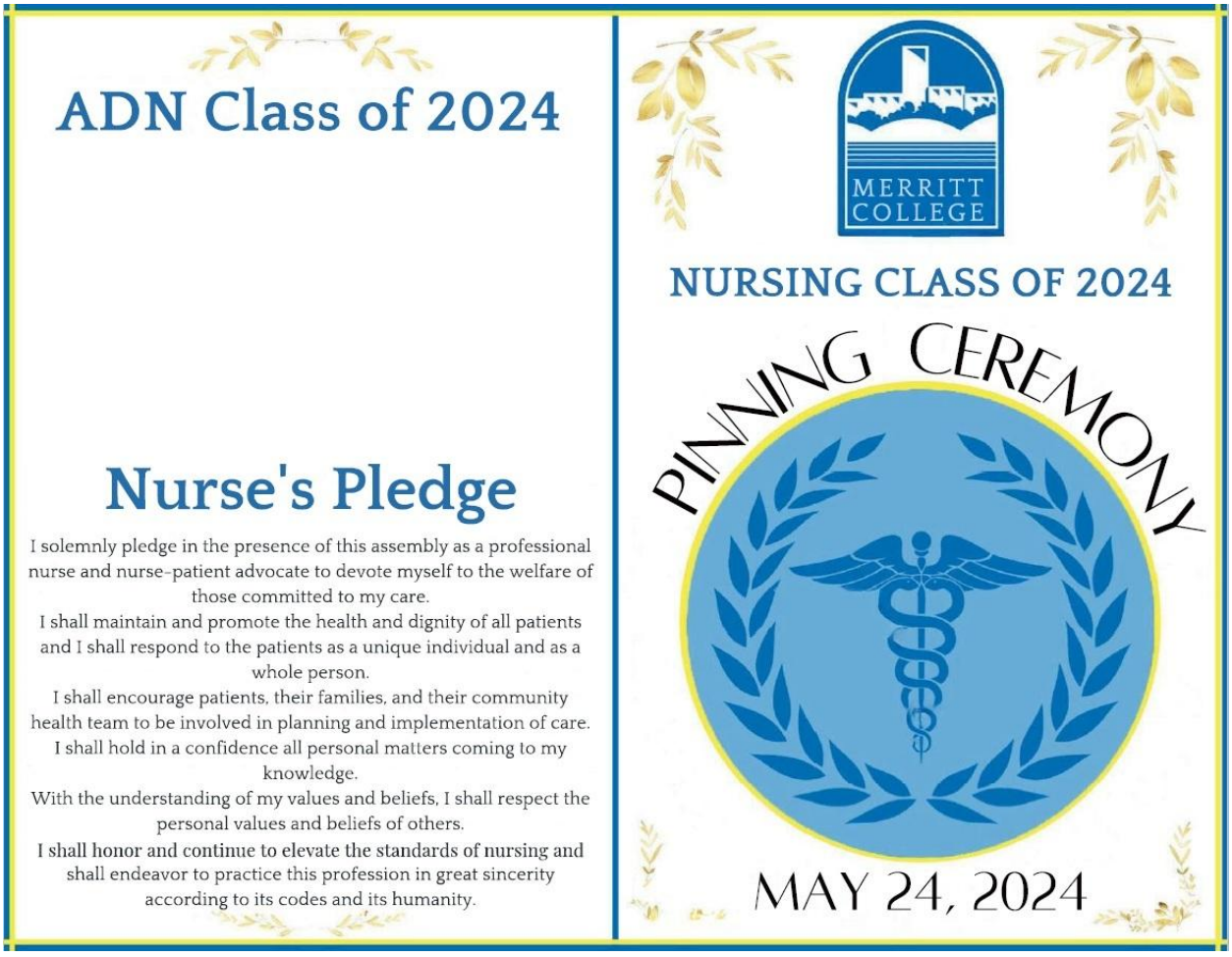
Additional activities associated with the pinning ceremony should be coordinated by student class officers and class representatives, in collaboration with their cohort, under the guidance of Faculty Class Advisor and Program Director. These activities may include:

- Invitations to college and district administration, advisory board members, college alumni, affiliated clinical agencies, community leaders, and honored guests (e.g., scholarship donors)
- Invitations to family and friends
- Guest speakers
- Student speakers
- Processional, ceremony, and recessional music
- Audio-visual media in collaboration with Merritt College IT
- Photography
- Ceremony Rehearsal
- Ceremony Reception, including catering before or after the ceremony

SAMPLE PINNING CEREMONY INVITATION



SAMPLE PINNING CEREMONY PROGRAM (OUTSIDE COVER)



ADN Class of 2024

Nurse's Pledge

I solemnly pledge in the presence of this assembly as a professional nurse and nurse-patient advocate to devote myself to the welfare of those committed to my care.

I shall maintain and promote the health and dignity of all patients and I shall respond to the patients as a unique individual and as a whole person.

I shall encourage patients, their families, and their community health team to be involved in planning and implementation of care.

I shall hold in a confidence all personal matters coming to my knowledge.

With the understanding of my values and beliefs, I shall respect the personal values and beliefs of others.

I shall honor and continue to elevate the standards of nursing and shall endeavor to practice this profession in great sincerity according to its codes and its humanity.

NURSING CLASS OF 2024

PINNING CEREMONY

MAY 24, 2024

SAMPLE PINNING CEREMONY PROGRAM (INSIDE CONTENT)



Master of Ceremony	Mr. Lynn Bratchett Assistant Program Director & Nursing Instructor
Class Speaker	Ms. Tatiana Colon Nursing Student
Presenter of Pins	Ms. Diana Barrios Nursing Instructor
Nursing Pledge	Ms. Diana Barrios Nursing Instructor
Closing Remarks	Mr. Lynn Bratchett Assistant Program Director & Nursing Instructor

FACULTY

Ms. Diana Barrios, MSN, RN
Drug Dosage Calculation & Maternity Theory/Clinical Instructor

Mr. Lynn Bratchett, BSN, RN, MBA
Program Assistant Director, Law and Ethics, Leadership, & Psychiatric Theory/Clinical Instructor

Ms. Evangeline Augustin, MSN, RN, MPH
Pediatrics Theory Instructor

Ms. Iona Henderson, MSN, RN
Intermediate & Advanced Medical-Surgical Theory/Clinical & Advanced Instructor

Ms. Marcela Alvarez Wash, MPH, RN, PHN
Nutrition & Pharmacology Instructor

Ms. Raufat Ikharo-Umaru, MSN, BSN, RN
Fundamentals Clinical, Skills Lab& Advanced Medical Surgical Clinical Instructor

Ms. Donna Ervin, MSN, BSN, RN
Skills Lab Instructor

Ms. Tracy Meggerson, BSN, RN
Physical Assessment & Skills Lab Instructor

Ms. Anh Nguyen, BSN, RN
Pediatrics Clinical Instructor

Ms. Dorothy Childs, BSN, RN, MPA, MA
Fundamentals Clinical Instructor

Melanie Strickland, MSN-FNP, RN
Intermediate Medical-Surgical Clinical Instructor

Ms. Dawn Williams, MSN, BSN, RN
Program Director of Merritt College Nursing Department

Ms. Khadija Robinson, NP-C
Skills Lab Instructor

Dr. Elena Todorova, DNP, FNP-C
Pediatrics Theory Instructor

Ms. Tracy Perron, BSN, RN
Pediatrics Clinical Instructor

Ms. Monica Mofidi, DNP(c), MSN, BSN, RN
Advanced Medical Surgical Clinical Instructor

Mr. Elisha Blain, RN
Advanced Medical Surgical Clinical Instructor

Ms. Fedila Jabir, BSN, RN
Fundamentals Adjunct Faculty

Ms. Waaduda Karim
Senior Clerical Assistant, Allied Health

Ms. Amecia Young
Program Specialist, Nursing

MERRITT COLLEGE ADN PROGRAM NURSING PIN

Designed by a member of the first graduating class, the ADN Program nursing pin represents the history, values, and professional commitment of graduates of the program. The pin design carries symbolic meaning. The Maltese Cross reflects the historic legacy of compassionate nursing service. It originates from the badge of the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem, a religious order known for establishing hospitals in Malta and Rhodes and providing care to the sick. The English branch of the order was active in the formation of the International Red Cross and continues to maintain hospitals.

The colors blue, white, and gold represent the professional qualities of integrity, commitment, and loyalty to the patient embedded in the nursing profession. The oak leaf and acorn at the base of the nursing pin symbolize potential, strength, and the continued growth and development of nurses throughout their professional careers. Together, these elements represent the values, responsibility, and lifelong commitment to patient care embodied by graduates of the ADN Program.



APPENDIX B:

SKILLS AND SIMULATION LABORATORY GUIDELINES AGREEMENT

MERRITT COLLEGE ADN PROGRAM

SKILLS AND SIMULATION LAB GUIDELINES AGREEMENT

The ADN Program Skills and Simulation Laboratories are designed to provide students with a safe, professional, and realistic clinical learning environment. Students are expected to demonstrate professionalism, accountability, patient safety awareness, infection control practices, and respectful communication at all times.
By signing below, I acknowledge that I have read, understand, and agree to comply with the following Skills and Simulation Lab Guidelines.

LAB CONDUCT & PREPARATION

Students are expected to:

- Arrive on time to the skills and simulation lab in student uniform.
- Bring necessary materials (stethoscope, watch, penlight, electronic device, notes, etc.).
- Prepare for the assigned topics or scenarios to be covered during each skills or simulation lab session.
- Silence phones and avoid distractions.
- Wait for instructor permission before entering the lab.

LAB ENVIRONMENT

Students are expected to:

- Refrain from eating, drinking, and chewing gum in the skills and simulation labs.
- Keep all food and beverages outside the lab space.
- Maintain a clean, safe, and professional clinical environment.

HAND HYGIENE & INFECTION CONTROL

Students are expected to:

- Perform hand hygiene upon entering and before leaving the skills and simulation labs.
- Clean desks/workstations with sanitizing wipes upon entering and before leaving.
- Perform hand hygiene before and after patient/manikin contact.
- Wear gloves at all times when working with simulation manikins.
- Use additional PPE when indicated.
- Maintain clean and organized workspaces.
- Dispose of materials appropriately (i.e., sharps only in sharps container).

PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR

Students are expected to:

- ❖ Communicate respectfully with peers, instructors, and simulated patients.
- ❖ Use therapeutic communication techniques.
- ❖ Remain engaged and in role throughout simulations.
- ❖ Take responsibility for actions and clinical decisions.
- ❖ Demonstrate readiness for real patient care.
- ❖ View simulation as a learning environment intended for skill-building and clinical growth.

THINK & ACT LIKE A NURSE

Students are expected to:

- ❖ Treat all simulations as real-life patient care situations.
- ❖ Use the nursing process: assessment, diagnosis, planning, implementation, and evaluation.
- ❖ Prioritize patient safety, comfort, privacy, and dignity.
- ❖ Verbalize clinical reasoning when appropriate.

EQUIPMENT USE & SAFETY

Students are expected to:

- ❖ Handle all Laerdal medical manikins and equipment carefully and respectfully.
- ❖ Avoid forcing joints, inserting unauthorized items, tampering with equipment, or removing/transporting manikins from designated patient beds or cribs.
- ❖ Report any manikin or equipment malfunctions or damage immediately to the instructor.
- ❖ Follow instructor guidance regarding all medical devices and equipment.

MEDICATION SAFETY

Students are expected to:

- ❖ Follow the Six Rights of Safe Medication Administration:
    - Right Patient
    - Right Medication
    - Right Dose
    - Right Route
    - Right Time
    - Right Documentation

- Verbalize medication checks during simulation activities.
- Never administer real medications to simulated patients.

COMMUNICATION & TEAMWORK

Students are expected to:

- Use structured communication tools such as SBAR (Situation, Background, Assessment, Recommendation).
- Delegate appropriately during group activities.
- Support team members and communicate patient safety concerns promptly.

DOCUMENTATION

Students are expected to:

- Document accurately and in a timely manner.
- Use appropriate medical terminology.
- Refrain from falsifying documentation.

PRE-BRIEFING & DEBRIEFING

Students are expected to:

- Participate actively in pre-briefing activities to understand simulation objectives and expectations.
- Ask questions when clarification is needed.

During debriefing, students are expected to:

- Reflect honestly on performance.
- Provide and accept constructive feedback respectfully.
- Focus on improving clinical judgment and patient care skills.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Students are expected to:

- Maintain confidentiality regarding simulation scenarios and peer performance.
- Refrain from discussing or sharing simulation information outside the classroom or on social media.

STUDENT ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I acknowledge that I have read, understand, and agree to comply with the *Merritt College ADN Program Skills and Simulation Lab Guidelines*. I understand that failure to follow these guidelines may result in removal from the skills/simulation laboratory environment and/or disciplinary action in accordance with ADN Program policies.

Student Name (Print): _____

Student Signature: _____

Date: _____

Faculty Signature: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX C:
ATI CONTENT MASTERY SERIES GRADING RUBRIC

ATI CONTENT MASTERY SERIES GRADING RUBRIC

PRACTICE ASSESSMENT	
4 points	
Complete Practice Assessment A Remediation: • Minimum 1-hour Focused Review on initial attempt • For each topic missed, complete the required remediation as per program's policy. * • Take Post Study Quiz (if available)** and complete the required remediation per program's policy.	Complete Practice Assessment B Remediation: • Minimum 1-hour Focused Review on initial attempt • For each topic missed, complete the required remediation as per program's policy. * • Take Post Study Quiz (if available)** and complete the required remediation per program's policy.

STANDARDIZED PROCTORED ASSESSMENT			
Level 3 = 4 points	***Level 2 = 3 points***	***Level 1 = 1 point***	***Below Level 1 = 0 points***
Remediation = 2 points: • Minimum 1-hour Focused Review • For each topic missed, complete the required remediation as per program's policy. *	Remediation = 2 points: • Minimum 2-hour Focused Review • For each topic missed, complete the required remediation as per program's policy. *	Remediation = 2 points: • Minimum 3-hour Focused Review • For each topic missed, complete the required remediation as per program's policy. *	Remediation = 2 points: • Minimum 4-hour Focused Review • For each topic missed, complete the required remediation as per program's policy. *
10/10 points	***9/10 points***	***7/10 points***	***6/10 points***
Proctored Assessment Retake***			
No retake required	***No retake required***	***Retake required/recommended***	***Retake required/recommended***

* Remediation includes a minimum of 1-hour Focused Review and possibly additional remediation assignments per instructor discretion.

** A Post-Study Quiz may be provided to a student based on their specific knowledge gaps. Major Content Areas 75% or less - 0 to 50 items possible for additional remediation. If no quiz is generated, alternative remediation methods may be assigned per instructor discretion.

*** If the student meets the Level 2 benchmark on the ATI Assessment Retake, they may earn an additional point. For example, a student who scored a Level 1 on the first Proctored Assessment may now earn a total of 8 points.

APPENDIX D:

ADVANCED PLACEMENT POLICY STATEMENT ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM

MERRITT COLLEGE ADN PROGRAM

ADVANCED PLACEMENT POLICY STATEMENT ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The ADN Program curriculum is sequential with each semester building upon prior knowledge and clinical competency. Due to the complexity of nursing practice and the responsibility for patient safety, all students seeking advanced placement are expected to demonstrate current knowledge and competency in fundamental nursing concepts. Students are expected to have the ability to apply the following knowledge in the clinical setting:

- Nursing Process: application of the nursing process, including assessment, data collection, identification of patient problems, prioritization, planning, implementation, and evaluation of care
- Nursing Theories: integration of professional and theoretical concepts of nursing theories into evidence-based nursing practice, including application of Watson's Theory of Human Caring, Neuman's Systems Model, and Roy's Adaptation Model
- Clinical Reasoning and Pathophysiology: ability to integrate theory into clinical practice, analyze pathological conditions, and perform initial and ongoing patient assessments
- Professional Roles and Responsibilities: understanding professional nursing roles and legal and ethical principles in the health care setting
- Communication Skills: use of therapeutic communication with patients and professional communication with healthcare team members and instructors, including accurate electronic documentation of patient care
- Pharmacology: knowledge of medication classifications, dosage calculations, administration routes, adverse effects, and nursing implications, including safe medication and intravenous fluid administration
- Human Development and Lifespan Care: understanding of physiological and psychosocial changes across the lifespan
- Biological Sciences: knowledge of human anatomy, physiology, pathophysiology, microbiology, and the endocrine system
- Fluid, Electrolyte, and Acid-Base Balance: application of principles related to fluid balance and physiological regulation
- Safety Principles: implementation of safety measures including medication safety, infection control (standard precautions), body mechanics, and environmental safety
- Patient Comfort and Well-Being: measures to promote physical and psychological comfort, including pain management and emotional support.

- ❖ Organization and Time Management: ability to function efficiently and prioritize patient care in a timely manner
- ❖ Immune Response and Asepsis: knowledge of infection prevention, immune function, and aseptic techniques

By signing below, I acknowledge that I have read and understand the Advanced Placement Policy Statement. I understand that I am responsible for possessing and applying the fundamental nursing knowledge and skills outlined above.

Student Name: _____

Student Signature: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX E:
STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS

STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS

Strategies for Success (S4S) Program for Prelicensure Nursing Students (1994-Present)

Founder and Author: Diane Breckenridge, PhD, MSN, RN, ANEF, FAAN

- Phases: pre-admission, retention, graduating on time, passing NCLEX-RN, and joining nursing workforce as culturally competent RNs and transition to practice.
- Generated and tested when advising nursing program applicants.
- Based on content analysis of student interviews.
- Tracking student challenges by Strategies for Success Risk Assessment Profile (RAPS) with success interventions.
- Systematic standardized testing with remediation integrated into the program to increase retention, on-time graduation, striving to pass NCLEX-RN on first attempt, and transition into the nursing workforce.
- Shared through presentations to prelicensure nursing programs and in external funding grants for program operations and student scholarships and stipends.
- The dates of program development and implementation overlap times as a faculty member, doctoral student, postdoctoral Fellow to Tenured Professor, Director, Chair, College Vice President, and Dean of Nursing with numerous Donor, association, state, and federal – HRSA funding totaling $33 million with 50 nursing programs and over 290,000 students.
- Dr. Breckenridge, as Class President and a prelicensure nursing student, first began the concept of S4S in 1971, known as a “New Access Student” in Nursing School to increase classmates’ retention. The majority of her 48 classmates, including herself, were under the HRSA Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW) Federal Nursing Workforce Program for underserved and under-resourced students to go to nursing school under loan forgiveness.

APPENDIX F:
ADN PROGRAM DRESS CODE AND PERSONAL HYGIENE POLICY AGREEMENT

MERRITT COLLEGE ADN PROGRAM
DRESS CODE AND PERSONAL HYGIENE POLICY AGREEMENT

I, _____, as a student in the Merritt College Associate Degree Nursing Program, represent both the nursing program and the nursing profession. In order to present myself in a professional manner, I agree to adhere to the ADN Program Dress Code and Personal Hygiene Policy while participating in classroom, clinical, skills laboratory, and simulation (SIM) laboratory activities.

CLASSROOM, CLINICAL, AND SKILLS/SIMULATION LABORATORY ATTIRE

- Royal blue student uniform (scrub top and pants) must be clean, intact, and wrinkle-free.
- For the Nursing 4B: Psychiatric Nursing clinical experience, the standard royal blue uniform will not be worn unless otherwise directed by the clinical instructor. Instead, loose-fitting, clean, and intact professional street clothing that is free of slogans and safe for a psychiatric setting must be worn. Denim, sweatpants, leggings/tights, and gym attire are not permitted.
- Black socks and black shoes must be clean and intact.
- The ADN Program patch (see below) must be displayed in the center of the left sleeve of the uniform top.
- The hospital-issued and/or student identification badge (as directed by the instructor) must be worn above the waist and clearly visible (last name should be covered in the Nursing 4B clinical).

PICTURE OF UNIFORM PATCH:



SHOES

- Black leather nursing or athletic shoes with minimal walking noise are required.
- Shoes must be completely black, including logos and soles.
- Canvas or cloth athletic shoes, clogs, boots, sandals, and Crocs are not permitted.

HYGIENE

- Neutral body odor and fresh breath must be maintained. Odors such as smoke, tobacco, and marijuana are not acceptable.
- Perfumes, scented lotions, and strongly fragranced deodorants are not permitted as they may trigger allergic or respiratory reactions in patients.

HAIR

- Hair must be clean and neatly styled.
- Long hair must be secured away from the face and shoulders.
- Ponytails, buns, and braids are acceptable.
- Facial hair must be neatly trimmed and maintained to allow proper use of surgical masks or other personal protective equipment.

FINGERNAILS

- Nails must be short and clean.
- Nail polish, gel polish, acrylic nails, artificial nails, and nail tips are not permitted in accordance with infection-control guidelines.

JEWELRY

- A wristwatch must be worn for use while practicing patient assessments.
- Jewelry should be minimal in the interest of professional appearance and safety.
- One small ring and single stud earrings are permitted. Ear gauges/plugs, ear weights, ear tunnels, and ear cartilage piercings are not permitted.
- No additional rings or visible body piercings are allowed.

TATTOOS AND BODY ART

- Tattoos and body art should be covered during all skills and SIM laboratory sessions.
- A royal blue long-sleeve shirt may be worn under the uniform top to cover arm tattoos.
- Students must also follow any additional guidelines established by the instructor.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF COMPLIANCE

I acknowledge that if I arrive to the classroom, clinical, skills laboratory, or simulation laboratory out of compliance with the Dress Code and Personal Hygiene Policy, I may not be permitted to participate in the session at the discretion of the instructor. This absence will be considered missed time and must be made up in accordance with course and program policies to meet clinical laboratory practice requirements. I also acknowledge that I am responsible for maintaining compliance with the Dress Code and Hygiene Policy throughout the session. If I become noncompliant during the session, I may be dismissed at the discretion of the instructor.

My signature acknowledges that I have read and understand the Merritt College ADN Program Dress Code and Personal Hygiene Policy as well as the consequences of non-compliance while participating in program activities.

Student Name (Printed): _____

Student Signature: _____

Date: _____

Course: _____

Instructor: _____

DISCLAIMER

The Merritt College Associate Degree Nursing Program has made every reasonable effort to ensure that the information contained in this handbook is accurate and current at the time of publication. However, program information and requirements are subject to change without prior notice to ensure compliance with state regulations and the requirements of affiliated clinical agencies. The College and the ADN Department reserve the right to add, amend, or repeal policies, procedures, rules, and regulations as necessary to comply with state or district regulations and the recommendations or requirements of affiliated clinical agencies.

Students are responsible for complying with current program policies, clinical agency requirements, and all applicable college and district regulations throughout their enrollment in the program.

Additional information is provided on the Merritt College ADN Program webpage: http://www.merritt.edu/wp/nurs/

MERRITT COLLEGE
ASSOCIATE DEGREE NURSING PROGRAM
2025-2026 Student Handbook Acknowledgement

I, _____, acknowledge that I have received a
Student Name

copy of the 2025-2026 Merritt College Associate Degree Nursing Program Student Handbook. My signature indicates that I have read and understand the information contained in the handbook and agree to comply with all program policies, requirements, and conditions outlined therein.

_____
Student Signature

_____
Date