

# DIVISION OF HEALTH SCIENCES STUDENT HANDBOOK

For Students in All Health Science Programs

## Student Handbook

2023-24



# TECHNICAL COLLEGE OF THE LOWCOUNTRY

Student Handbooks constitute Student Policy and are revised as needed.  
(Please go to [TCL.edu](https://www.tcl.edu) for updates)

**Approved by Dr. Joey Swearingen, Dean of Health Sciences, June 28, 2023**

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## SECTION I:

### A. TECHNICAL COLLEGE OF THE LOWCOUNTRY MISSION

The Technical College of the Lowcountry's mission is to provide accessible, high-quality academic education and workforce training to serve the needs of individuals, businesses, and industries in Beaufort, Colleton, Hampton, and Jasper counties.

### B. HEALTH SCIENCES DIVISION MISSION

The mission of the Health Sciences Division at the Technical College of the Lowcountry is to provide quality, affordable Health Sciences programs that prepare technically competent graduates who will provide quality care within a rapidly changing healthcare environment.

## SECTION II: ACADEMIC INFORMATION

### A. ACADEMIC ADVISEMENT

Each student in a Health Sciences Program is assigned a faculty advisor to assist in advising of courses within the curriculum. It is the responsibility of the student to schedule an appointment with his/her advisor during each registration period, including when the student is registering on-line. Any student who has problems that interfere with satisfactory attendance, progress, and performance is encouraged to meet with their advisor to discuss these issues.

### B. ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT (See TCL student handbook and course syllabi)

Health care professionals hold the public trust. Academic misconduct by health science students calls that trust into question; and therefore, academic integrity is expected. Academic misconduct may result in withdrawal from related health science courses. Also, depending on the severity of the student's academic misconduct, the student will not only be withdrawn from the program, but they will not be allowed for re-entry and/or reapplication to all Health Science programs.

### C. PROGRESSION: STANDARDS FOR ACADEMIC PROGRESS

The Health Sciences grading scale will be used to determine grades.

A = 93% - 100%

B = 85% - 92%

C = 78% - 84%

D = 70% - 77%

F = 0% - 69%

### Grading Methodology

- The final grade in all Health Sciences courses must be a 78.00 or higher in order to pass the course and progress in the program. Grades will not be rounded up. A final grade of less than 78.00 is not passing in any Health Science Program and does not meet progression requirements.
- Students absent from an examination or presentation will receive a "0" grade for the examination unless other arrangements are made with the individual instructor prior to the examination or presentation day (or on the examination or presentation day before the test/presentation is scheduled to be given). Arrangements may be completed by telephone. If the instructor is not available, a message should be left on the instructor's voicemail AND with another member of the faculty or an administrative assistant. Messages sent by other students are unacceptable. The student is responsible for notifying the instructor for the reason of the absence. Make up quizzes and/or examinations *may* be offered, at the instructor's discretion, during the final examination period. An additional option for makeup testing includes reweighting the final examination. It is the responsibility of the student to contact the appropriate instructor to arrange to make up the examination. The instructor will decide the method of examination.
- Grades are posted within one week of administration of tests and examinations.
- Students with concerns or questions regarding grades awarded for a graded activity should contact the course faculty within one week of the grade being posted.

## **Standards**

Students in the Health Sciences Programs are also subject to the standards detailed below:

1. All required courses taken prior to acceptance into a Health Sciences Program must be completed with a “C” or better.
2. Program courses must be completed in the sequence outlined in the current TCL catalog. No co-requisite course may be delayed. A curriculum profile detailing required program courses in their sequence will be developed upon entry into the program. This profile must be adhered to; any deviation from the sequence may result in the student being withdrawn from the program.
3. Students are eligible to reenter a program only one time. Conditions for re-entry in program student handbooks must be met.
4. Students with two academic failures (D, F, or W) within their program of study are not eligible for re-entry.
5. Students are required to maintain an overall TCL 2.25 grade point average (GPA) in order to progress and to graduate.
6. Two academic failures (D, F, or W) within the discipline (MED, MTH, NUR, PTH, RAD, and SUR) will result in the student being withdrawn from the program.
7. All curriculum requirements must be met in order to successfully complete the program
8. A No-Call, No-Show for any clinical experience will result in the student being withdrawn from their program.
9. All health forms, CPR, and health insurance requirements must be completed annually to participate in laboratory/clinical. In addition, a drug screen and background check is required upon entry into the program. It is the student’s responsibility to keep these requirements current and to submit the appropriate documentation to the Health Sciences office. Failure to do so will result in withdrawal from program.
10. A student will not be able to progress in the course sequence if:
  - a. there is demonstration of a consistent pattern of negligence and/or unsafe clinical practice documented by the clinical instructor
  - b. there is professional negligence and/or verbal, physical or emotional abuse of a patient
  - c. there is a breach of professional standards of conduct. Such actions might include but are not limited to:
    - i. failure to recognize the need for assistance when unprepared for clinical action.
    - ii. failure to take clinical action when such action is essential to the health and safety of the patient and is within the student’s scope of knowledge.
    - iii. arrest and/or criminal charges while enrolled in a health science program. It is the student’s responsibility to notify the Dean or Program Director on the first class day after an arrest.
    - iv. attending clinical while under the influence of alcohol and/or drug(s). Use of substances that interfere with the judgment, mood, and/or motor coordination of health science students pose an unacceptable risk for patients, health care agencies, the College, and the faculty. Therefore, use of alcohol, illegal drugs or other substances and/or the misuse of legal therapeutic drugs by health science students while engaged in any portion of their educational experiences is strictly prohibited. Faculty members who suspect a violation of this TCL policy are required to take action. Students are required to be knowledgeable of and abide by this college policy.
    - v. failure to manage one’s behavior in such a manner as to have an adverse effect on the relationship with a patient, significant other, clinical site, or colleague.
    - vi. deliberately giving inaccurate information or withholding pertinent information regarding clinical care.
    - vii. falsifying medical records.
    - viii. performing clinical activities detrimental to the health and safety of the patient, outside the scope of knowledge/practice, or without appropriate supervision.
    - ix. failure to assume responsibility for completing clinical activities.
      - x. breach of patient privacy or rights.
      - xi. failure to achieve satisfactory completion of clinical competencies designated for each program.
      - xii. failure to achieve a satisfactory laboratory/clinical evaluation.

#### **D. REQUIREMENTS FOR GRADUATION AND THE AWARD OF ASSOCIATE OF APPLIED SCIENCE DEGREE**

1. Completion of Health Sciences, general education and science courses as required by the program
2. Completion of each course with a minimum grade of “C” (78%)
3. Students must be eligible to rotate through all program specific clinical affiliates to progress through the program. Clinical clearance is determined by the clinical site, not TCL.
4. TCL GPA 2.25 or greater in specified program
5. Completion of the last two (2) semesters of Health Sciences courses at TCL
6. Completion of all Health Sciences courses within 3 years of beginning the program (including SMART courses)
7. Recommendation of the faculty

#### **E. REQUIREMENTS FOR GRADUATION AND THE AWARD OF DIPLOMA OF HEALTH SCIENCE**

1. Completion of Health Sciences, general education and science courses as required by the program
2. Completion of each course with a minimum grade of “C” (78%)
3. Students must be eligible to rotate through all program specific clinical affiliates to progress through the program. Clinical clearance is determined by the clinical site, not TCL.
4. TCL GPA 2.25 or greater in specified program
5. Completion of the last two (2) semesters of Health Sciences clinical courses at TCL
6. Completion of all Health Sciences courses within 2 years of beginning the program
7. Recommendation of the faculty

#### **F. REQUIREMENTS FOR GRADUATION AND THE AWARD OF CERTIFICATE OF HEALTH SCIENCE**

1. Completion of the Health Sciences courses, and science courses as required by the program
2. Completion of each course with a minimum grade of “C” (78%)
3. Students must be eligible to rotate through all program specific clinical affiliates to progress through the program. Clinical clearance is determined by the clinical site, not TCL.
4. TCL GPA 2.25 or greater in specified program
5. Completion of all Health Sciences course at TCL
6. Completion of all Health Sciences courses within 2 years of beginning the program
7. Recommendation of the faculty

#### **G. REMOVAL FROM PROGRAM**

If a student feels they were wrongfully removed from a Health Science program, the first step would be to appeal the removal to the Division Dean.

1. The student will alert the Division Dean of their intent to appeal.
2. The Division Dean will select a committee to review the decision. This will include the Division Dean and two faculty from unrelated Health Science programs.
3. The committee will meet with both the student and the involved faculty and/or program director (at separate times) to gather facts regarding the given case.
4. The committee will decide whether or not the removal from program is justified.
  - a. If the committee decides to uphold the removal from program, the student still has the right to pursue the TCL grievance process.
  - b. If the committee decides that the student was wrongfully removed from the program, the student will be allowed to resume classes in their given program. However, this does not mean that the student is exempt from disciplinary actions within the program (i.e. learning contract, failing grade, etc.).

#### **H. WITHDRAWAL FROM HEALTH SCIENCES PROGRAMS**

The Withdrawal Policy of TCL will be followed as outlined in the current College Catalog and the course syllabus. In addition, the requirements of Health Sciences Programs stipulate that once the student is in the course sequence, course withdrawal may also result in withdrawal from the program. It is the student’s responsibly to assure that all paperwork is completed and submitted. If the student does not initiate course withdrawal with their academic advisor and instructor, the student will be considered an enrolled student in the course and receive the grade that was achieved while enrolled.

## SECTION III: GENERAL STUDENT INFORMATION

1. All pagers, cell phones and other electronic devices that may disrupt the environment must be turned off during lecture and lab periods.
2. No pagers or phones are allowed in the clinical area. No exceptions will be made (See program handbook).
3. Basic calculators are allowed for quizzes/tests/exams. No other mechanical, internet, recording, or messaging devices are allowed during testing.
4. Clinical site assignments are subject to change and registration in a particular section does not guarantee a particular clinical slot.
5. Students may not attend clinical on any unit in which they are employed.
6. Family members will not be assigned to the same clinical or campus laboratory sections.

### **A. ATTENDANCE POLICY**

*(Consult the college catalog for details regarding the current college attendance policy.)*

**The program faculty in the Health Sciences Division have a responsibility to assure that all Health Sciences students have an adequate background of knowledge and skills. The faculty must insure that each student is able to utilize this knowledge and skill in a safe, professional manner in their clinical practice. Clinical courses are organized to provide knowledge of patient care and opportunities to apply this knowledge toward developing skills in the clinical laboratory.**

#### **Clinical Absence**

In the event of unavoidable clinical absence, the student must follow the protocol outlined in the course materials. A medical excuse may be required. Absences from the clinical area may result in the student's inability to demonstrate mastery of the clinical outcomes for a course. "No Call, No Show" for clinical is unprofessional conduct and the student will be withdrawn from the program.

#### **Data and feedback collected from affiliated clinical sites**

The Massage Therapy, Medical Assisting, Nursing, Physical Therapist Assistant, Radiologic Technology and Surgical Technology Program Directors contacted clinical sites throughout the TCL service area to gather feedback on the "No Call/No Show" policy. The sites contacted included acute care and long term care facilities, freestanding providers, emergency clinics, surgical service facilities, and spas. These sites hire many graduates of TCL Health Science Programs. Responses from the affiliated clinical sites voiced strong support of the "No Call/No Show" policy as it is currently written. Respondents cited the following reasons for supporting the policy:

The policy

1. holds students accountable and promotes professional behavior enforcing a strong work ethic.
2. allows the clinical site to schedule procedures and activities to provide optimal learning experiences.
3. is imperative to providing quality patient care.

#### **Recommendation**

Program Directors unanimously recommend that the "No Call/No Show" policy be maintained as currently written.

#### **"No Call/ No Show" Process**

1. Student does not show up at clinical site and does not follow protocol outlined in syllabus.
2. Instructor contacts student informing he/she that they must meet with the instructor and program director prior to returning to class, campus laboratory, or clinical.
3. Instructor notifies Program Director that a potential "No Call/No Show" has occurred.
4. Instructor and Program Director meet with the student and provide student an opportunity to share his/her account of the events resulting in the potential "No Call/No Show". After this meeting, the instructor and Program Director will inform the student that:

- a. It is agreed that the student did not violate the “No Call/No Show” policy.

**OR**

- b. It is agreed that the student violated the “No Call/No Show” policy and is dismissed from the program.

The Program Director will instruct the student to meet with the Dean if they feel that actions taken were unfair.

5. Instructor and Program Director notify the Dean that a potential “No Call/ No Show” has occurred.
6. Student may schedule an appointment with Dean. At this meeting the student is provided with the opportunity to share his/her account of the events resulting in the potential “No Call/No Show” and actions taken. If after meeting with the student and reviewing information related to the event the Dean determines:
  - a. that the “No Call/No Show” policy was not violated, the student will remain in the program. The Dean will meet with all program faculty to review the related events and determine what action, if any, should be taken.
  - b. that the “No Call/No Show” policy was violated, the student is dismissed from program on the date of the meeting. The Dean provides the student with information on the grievance process and the VP of Student Affairs contact information; the Dean informs the Vice President of Student Affairs that student may be contacting the VPSA office for an appointment.

### **Tardiness**

Punctuality is an important element of professional behavior. Students are expected to arrive on time. The clock at the clinical agency/classroom/lab is used to determine tardiness. Should a pattern of tardiness develop, the problem will be handled by the instructor and may result in an unsatisfactory for the course, laboratory, or clinical.

### **Hazardous Weather**

See course syllabus

### **Jury Duty**

Students who are called for jury duty should request to be excused from jury duty if the duty interferes with classroom, laboratory, or clinical experiences. Delay in this process may jeopardize the chances of the student being excused by the court. All missed classroom, laboratory, or clinical experiences must be addressed with the Dean for the Division of Health Sciences and the course coordinator. The student is responsible for obtaining the missed classroom materials from the course coordinator.

## **B. GRADE REVIEW**

Refer to current TCL College Catalog/TCL Student Handbook

## **C. CHANGE OF NAME, ADDRESS, EMAIL ADDRESS OR TELEPHONE NUMBER**

Any change of name, address, email address or telephone number must be reported immediately to the Division of Health Sciences and TCL Student Records. The Division of Health Sciences will not be held responsible for failure of students to receive essential information if an incorrect address/e-mail is on file. All students are required to maintain a TCL e-mail account throughout their program.

## **D. PARKING**

### **Campus Parking**

Students must park in designated parking areas and obey all parking regulations as established by the College. Violations are punishable by fines, towing of vehicle at the owner’s expense, and/or loss of driving privileges on campus. Speed limit signs are posted around the buildings and parking areas. Students who exceed these limits will be denied the privilege of bringing their vehicles on campus. Students who expect to operate a motor vehicle on campus must register the vehicle upon enrolling at TCL. For more information, contact the TCL Security office.

### **Clinical Facility Parking**

Students are to park in areas specified by the facility. Students are NOT to park in areas designated for visitors to the facility or physicians. Students assigned to Beaufort Memorial Hospital may park in TCL student parking areas only.

## **E. TRANSPORTATION**

In order to provide students with a varied and comprehensive clinical experience, various clinical and observational sites within an approximate 60-mile radius of Beaufort are utilized. Students are required to provide their own transportation to these sites. Students are encouraged to carpool.

## **F. TUITION/FEE PAYMENT**

No student will be permitted to attend classes until tuition is paid. Students should refer to the current TCL catalog.

# **SECTION IV: PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT**

## **A. PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY**

Breach of this policy may result in disciplinary action and/or termination from the program.

The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) was enacted to protect the privacy of all health information. It is the responsibility of the Health Sciences student to maintain the confidentiality of patient information. **Under no circumstances should a student convey confidential information to anyone not involved in the care of the patient.** Students are not allowed to have cell phones or cameras in clinical facilities, and they should familiarize themselves with the guidelines for appropriate use of social networking. Students are also expected to maintain professional confidentiality regarding other students, hospital/facility employees, and physicians.

Confidential information includes but is not limited to:

- a. the identity and addresses of individuals served and services they received;
- b. the social and economic conditions or circumstances of any person served;
- c. agency evaluation of information about a person or health facility;
- d. medical data, including diagnosis and past history of disease or disability, concerning a person, and confidential facts pertaining to health facilities;
- e. the identity of persons or institutions that furnished health services to a person;
- f. information identified as confidential by appropriate federal and state authorities;
- g. special care needs to be taken to preserve the dignity and confidentiality of patients, including those patients with infectious diseases or conditions.
- h. the patient has the right to every consideration of his/her privacy concerning his/her own medical care. Case discussion, consultation, examination, and treatment are confidential and should be conducted discretely.
- i. the patient has the right to expect that all communications and records pertaining to his/her care should be treated as confidential. All patient information shall be regarded as confidential and available only to authorized users.

## **B. GUIDELINES FOR APPROPRIATE USE OF SOCIAL NETWORKING WEBSITES**

Breach of this policy may result in disciplinary action and/or termination from the program.

1. Social networking websites provide unique opportunities for students to get to know one another, share experiences, and keep contact. As with any public forum, it is important that users of these sites are aware of the associated risks and act in a manner that does not embarrass the students, the Health Sciences Division, clinical sites, or The Technical College of the Lowcountry. It is also important to ensure patient information is not made publicly available. The Health Sciences Division has adopted the following guidelines to assist students safely using these sites.
2. Personal Privacy
  - A. We recommend setting your profiles on social networking sites so that only those individuals who you have provided access may see your personal information.
  - B. We recommend evaluating photos of yourself that are posted to these sites and “untagging” photos that depict you in what may be construed as compromising situations.
  - C. Be sure you are aware of the security and privacy options available to you on any sites where you post personal information. Keep in mind that privacy settings are not impervious, and information can be shared willingly or unwillingly with others, even with “Friends Only” access.



3. Protection of Patient Information
  - A. Comments made on social networking sites should be considered the same as if they were made in a public place in the hospital.
  - B. HIPAA rules apply online, and students may be held criminally liable for comments that violate HIPAA.
  - C. Remember that simply removing the name of a patient does not make them anonymous. Family members or friends of that patient, or of other patients you are caring for, may be able to determine to whom you are referring based on the context.
4. Professionalism
  - A. Use of these sites can have legal ramifications. Comments made regarding care of patients, or that portray you or your colleague in an unprofessional manner, can be used in court or other disciplinary proceedings.
  - B. Pictures of students in uniform identifying them as affiliated with the Technical College of the Lowcountry are not allowed on any social media sites.
  - C. Statements made under your profile are attributable to you and are treated as if you verbally made that statement in a public place.
  - D. We recommend using discretion when choosing to log onto a social networking site at school. Keep in mind that the use of these sites during lecture, lab, and clinical assignments is prohibited.
  - E. Keep in mind that photographs and statements made are potentially viewable by future employers.
  - F. Students may be subject to disciplinary actions within the College for comments that are unprofessional or violate patient privacy.
  - G. Keep in mind you are representing The Technical College of the Lowcountry Health Sciences Division when you log onto a site and make a comment or post a photograph.

### **C. CONVICTION OF A CRIME**

Breach of this policy may result in disciplinary action and/or termination from the program.

**Conviction of a crime (other than a minor traffic violation) may make a student ineligible to take the national certification or licensing examination(s) upon graduation or for application for licensure in South Carolina and other states. Early notification to the appropriate State Licensing/Credentialing Board is recommended.**

Criminal conviction or pending criminal charges of any of the following will likely make the applicant ineligible to apply for licensure:

- A. crimes of violence (e.g., murder, manslaughter, criminal sexual assault, crimes involving the use of deadly force, assault and battery of a high and aggravated nature, assault and battery with intent to kill)
- B. crimes involving the distribution of illegal drugs
- C. crimes that involve Moral Turpitude

It is the responsibility of the applicant to contact the appropriate licensing board for clarification or advisement.

## **SECTION V: DIVISION REQUIREMENTS**

### **A. CPR CERTIFICATION**

Students must have a current American Heart Association Basic Life Support for the Health Care Provider CPR certificate.. This certification must be kept current according to the expiration date of the card and maintained throughout the program. It is the student's responsibility to complete the CPR certification. Students will not be permitted in the clinical area without current certification.

### **B. HEALTH STATUS**

Breach of this policy may result in disciplinary action and/or termination from the program

Student health information is kept confidential. Release of health forms to clinical facilities may be required to be eligible for clinical rotations. The Health Science Division retains health files for 90 days after a student graduates or withdraws from a program; students no longer in a program may obtain their records from the division office.

1. **Health Examination**

Prior to entering Health Sciences Program students must have a Division of Health Sciences history and health examination form completed, along with required immunizations/testing, by a licensed health care provider by the designated date. Results of the history and health examination must conclude that the student is mentally, physically and emotionally qualified for college classes and patient care. Students who do not submit the required Division of Health Sciences health documentation by the designated date will not be permitted to continue in the program.

2. **Drug Screen**

Drug screens for illicit, mood altering, or non-prescribed substances are required prior to clinical experiences. Students with positive results will be excluded from the clinical setting and withdrawn from the program.

In addition to the initial screening that occurs prior to clinical experiences, students may be subject to testing per agency affiliation agreement and/or for cause, such as slurred speech, impaired physical coordination, inappropriate behavior, or pupillary changes. The suspected individual will be asked to have a drug screen done immediately, at his/her own expense, with a report sent to the Program Director within 24 hours. The student will be dismissed from all clinical activities until the issue is resolved. Failure to submit to the drug screen or attempting to tamper with the sample or the results will result in the student not being allowed to satisfy clinical objectives, therefore completion of the course and progression in the program will not occur.

3. **Health Update**

Prior to beginning the second year, Health Sciences students must complete a health update that includes TB skin testing or chest x-ray. Failure to do so will prevent the student from continuing in the program.

4. **Change in Health Status**

Students must notify the Dean of the Division of Health Sciences of any changes in health status that occur following admission to the program (i.e. injuries, major illnesses or surgery). Documentation from a health care provider that the student is mentally, physically and emotionally capable to undertake the requirements of the program in which they are enrolled will be required on the *Changes in Health Status* form in order for the student to continue in the Health Sciences Program.

5. **Pregnancy**

If during the course of education, a student becomes pregnant, she may *voluntarily* choose to declare her pregnancy to the Program Director *in writing*. Revealing her pregnancy is *not* a requirement and is the decision of the student. The student may choose not to *declare* her pregnancy, in which case, the student will be treated as though she is not pregnant. Once a pregnancy is declared, the student also has the right to *undeclare* the pregnancy at any time but should also be completed *in writing*.

Any student that declares pregnancy must have her health care provider complete the division *Changes in Health Status* form regarding her ability to perform all expected lectures, labs, and clinical functions fully, safely, and without jeopardizing the health and wellbeing of the student, fetus, or patient before registration each semester. In order to resume her class and clinical activities after delivery, the student must bring a written statement from her healthcare provider on the *Changes in Health Status* form. Students who do not bring these statements will not be permitted to continue their clinical experience. If a student does NOT declare her pregnancy, the Division of Health Sciences will assume that a pregnancy does NOT exist.

**\*Please refer to your specific Health Science Program Student Handbook for proper policy regarding declaration of pregnancy.**

6. **BACK GROUND SCREENING**

Breach of this policy may result in disciplinary action and/or termination from the program.

Students must complete a background screening before starting in their given Health Sciences program. Failure to do so by the given date will result in withdrawal from the program. Conviction of a crime may make a student ineligible to participate in clinical experiences resulting in removal from the Health Sciences Program.

## **C. INSURANCE**

### **1. Personal Health Insurance**

Students are required to provide proof of personal health insurance to be eligible to apply and progress through the program.

### **2. Accident Insurance**

TCL students are provided with accident insurance coverage. Students are covered to and from classes and clinical, while on campus, and while engaged in an assigned TCL clinical activity. A student who is injured on campus or while in the clinical setting must immediately notify the instructor. The clinical instructor will arrange for the student to receive appropriate care. The student and instructor must complete an accident form promptly for submission to the TCL Student Affairs Office. The accident form and copies of any charges incurred must be taken to the TCL Student Affairs Office promptly. The appropriate incident forms will be completed as indicated by the policy of the health care facility.

### **3. Malpractice Insurance**

College students are covered by a college policy for a fee. The fee for the premiums is paid at the beginning of each semester at the time of registration. No student will be permitted in the clinical area without this coverage. Re-entry students must confirm the correct major and that the proper fees are assessed.

## **D. OSHA's Bloodborne Pathogens Standard**

Health Sciences students will receive training on bloodborne pathogens and are expected to follow Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Standard Precautions at all times.