



SOUTHERN UNION
STATE COMMUNITY COLLEGE
—— Health Sciences Division ——

**Medical Assistant
Technology Program
Student Handbook**

2026 – 2027 Academic Year

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Southern Union State Community College and the Medical Assistant Technology program!

Southern Union values every student who attends the College and respects every student's rights and privileges. We have prepared this *Student Handbook* to allow you to carefully review the opportunities, rights, responsibilities, and policies that apply to you as a Medical Assistant Technology student. Unless otherwise designated in a course syllabus, these policies apply to each Medical Assistant Technology course you enroll in. If, for any reason, routine progression through the program is interrupted, the policies in the Student Handbook and College Catalog in effect at the time of readmission will apply.

As a student in the Medical Assistant Technology program, you will agree to read, understand, and abide by each policy outlined in this handbook.

Each person at Southern Union State Community College is committed to your success as a student, a professional, and most importantly, an individual. If you need additional assistance, our doors are always open to you.

Again, welcome to the Medical Assistant Technology program at Southern Union State Community College!

Rhonda Davis, MSN, Dean of Health Sciences
Melanie Caldwell, EdD, MSN, RN, CCMA (NHA), MAT Program Director

MAT PROGRAM INFORMATION

PURPOSE OF THE PROGRAM

The purpose of the Medical Assistant Technology (MAT) Program is to prepare graduates for entry-level practice as medical assistants who are competent in the cognitive (knowledge), psychomotor (skills), and affective (behavior) learning domains, enabling them to provide quality patient care and function as an effective member of the healthcare workforce.

PROGRAM GOALS

Upon completion of the curriculum, the MAT student will be able to:

- Recognize and interpret basic medical terminology
- Describe the anatomy and pathophysiology of the human body
- Appreciate cultural differences and cultural diversity as a compassionate caregiver
- Demonstrate competency when preparing patients of all ages for various medical examinations, procedures, and treatments
- Employ techniques of therapeutic verbal and nonverbal communication
- Recognize the ethical, legal, and safety implications applicable to the field of medical assisting
- Respond to office emergencies appropriately and expeditiously
- Prioritize patients according to triage criteria
- Apply principles of nutrition when coaching patients regarding special dietary needs
- Demonstrate competent specimen collection and processing
- Calculate proper dosages of medication for administration with 100% accuracy
- Demonstrate appropriate medication administration while utilizing the identified rights of medication administration
- Perform administrative duties, including collection of protected health information, insurance claim processing, procedural coding, diagnostic coding, and bookkeeping procedures
- Display a courteous and professional attitude
- Secure gainful employment in the field of medical assisting

STATEMENT OF ACCREDITATION

The Southern Union State Community College Medical Assistant Technology Program is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP) upon the recommendation of the Medical Assisting Education Review Board (MAERB).

Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP)

9355 113th Street N., #7709

Seminole, Florida 33775

727-210-2350

www.caahep.org

Medical Assisting Education Review Board (MAERB)

20 N. Wacker Drive, Suite 1575

Chicago, Illinois 60606

1-800-228-2262

www.maerb.org

MAT PROGRAM CURRICULUM OVERVIEW

MAT Program – Short-Term Certificate Course Requirements

Phlebotomy Technician – Short-Term Certificate		
Course	Credit Hour	Semester Offered
MAT 125: Laboratory Procedures I	3	SU – MT1
MAT 215: Laboratory Procedures II	3	SU – MT2
MAT 239: Phlebotomy Preceptorship	3	FA

Administrative Medical Assistant – Short-Term Certificate		
Course	Credit Hour	Semester Offered
MAT 111 Clinical Procedures I	3	SP – MT1
MAT 205 Clinical Specialties for Medical Assistants	4	SP – MT2
HPS 105: Medical Terminology	3	FA, SP, SU
MAT 216: Pharmacology for the Medical Office	4	FA
OAD 214: Medical Office Procedures	3	SP
OAD 215: Health Information Management	3	FA
OAD 216: Advanced Health Information Management	3	SP

MAT PROGRAM CURRICULUM OVERVIEW

MAT Program – Certificate and AAS Degree Course Requirements

Medical Assistant Technology – Certificate		
Course	Credit Hour	Semester
MAT 111 Clinical Procedures I	3	FA – MT1
MAT 205 Clinical Specialties for Medical Assistants	4	FA – MT2
MAT 125: Laboratory Procedures I	3	SU – MT1
MAT 215: Laboratory Procedures II	3	SU – MT2
MAT 216: Pharmacology for the Medical Office	4	SP
MAT 218 EKG Technician	3	SP
MAT 239: Phlebotomy Preceptorship	3	FA
MAT 228: Medical Assistant Review Course	1	Final Semester
MAT 230: Medical Assisting Preceptorship	2	Final Semester
OAD 214: Medical Office Procedures	3	SP
OAD 215: Health Information Management	3	FA
OAD 216: Advanced Health Information Management	3	SP
BIO 111: Survey of Human Biology (or sequence of BIO 201 and BIO 202)	4 (8)	All
ENG 101: English Comp 1	3	All
HED 231: First Aid	3	All
HPS 105: Medical Terminology	3	All
Fine Arts or Humanities Elective	3	All
MTH 100: Inter College Algebra (or higher level MTH)	3	All
SPH 106: Fund of Oral Communication (or SPH 107: Fund of Public Speaking)	3	All
Additional Courses Required for AAS Degree		
PSY 200: General Psychology	3	All
Elective Options for AAS Degree. Must select one of the following courses:		
CIS 146: Microcomputer Applications	3	All
EDU 100: Exploring Teaching as a Profession	3	All
NAS 100: Long-Term Care for Nursing Assistants	4	All
OAD 101: Keyboarding	3	All
PSY 210: Human Growth and Development	3	All

CERTIFICATION/EMPLOYMENT DISCLAIMER

Many healthcare facilities will not employ a person, even if fully certified or licensed, who has been convicted of a felony or has unfit personal habits, including alcohol or drug abuse. While an applicant may meet the minimum qualifications, final approval to take a certification exam is subject to the specific certification body's decision. The decision to offer employment is subject to the discretion of the individual health care facility.

CHANGES TO PROGRAM - INFORMING STUDENTS

The MAT Program communicates policies and procedures to students using the MAT Program Student Handbook, the learning management system (LMS), the College Catalog, and the institutional website. The MAT Program Student Handbook is revised annually to provide current and accurate information. However, changes may occur at any time during the academic year. Program-specific handbooks may be accessed using Southern Union State Community College's website. The instructor will inform students regarding changes in program policies and procedures. Information describing such changes may be distributed to each student individually, posted in classrooms, outside the faculty office, or within the LMS (Canvas). Instructors and the MAT Program Director will be available to answer questions regarding any changes. Upon entering the program, MAT program students must submit documentation that they have read and understood the current handbook. MAT program students must also provide annual documentation that they have read and understood the current handbook, if updated, while their degrees are in progress.

ADMISSION, PROGRESSION, WITHDRAWAL, AND REINSTATEMENT

MAT PROGRAM ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Beginning Fall 2025, traditional applicants to the Medical Assistant Technology program must meet the following criteria:

- College Admission. Applicants must be unconditionally admitted to SUSCC.
 - Current or former SUSCC students must have a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.0.
 - Transfer students must be admitted to SUSCC with a clear academic status and a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.0.
- Transcripts. The Records Office must receive official transcripts from high school and all post-secondary institutions attended before applying.
- Placement Requirements. Applicants must demonstrate eligibility for English 101, eligibility for Math 100, and satisfy SUSCC's reading requirement.
- Test Score Requirement. Applicants must satisfy **one** of the following options:
 - Option One: Minimum composite score of 18 on the ACT National or ACT Residual. No superscores will be accepted.
 - Option Two: Earning a minimum of silver level on the ACT WorkKeys exam.
- Submission of completed application for the MAT Program before the established deadline. Incomplete applications will not be considered for admission.

MAT PROGRAM PROGRESSION REQUIREMENTS

To progress within the MAT program, the student must meet the following requirements:

1. Cumulative GPA of 2.0.
2. Minimum grade of "C" (75 average or higher) in all required courses.
3. Satisfactory level of mental and physical health, as evidenced by proof of current immunizations, ability to meet the program's essential functions, current CPR certification, negative drug screen and background check, current TB test, and documentation of health insurance *before* enrolling in a MAT preceptorship/clinical course (MAT 125, MAT 230, MAT 239, NAS 100).

***A total of two unsuccessful course attempts (D, F, or W) within the MAT program
will result in dismissal from the program.***

REINSTATEMENT INTO THE MAT PROGRAM

If desired, students who do not meet the above progression requirements must apply for reinstatement to the Medical Assistant Technology program. Students who have withdrawn or failed to complete a MAT course and are eligible to return to that course will be considered for reinstatement to the program. Students applying for reinstatement may be required to demonstrate competency in clinical skills. Reinstatement into the program is not guaranteed and will depend on classroom and clinical space availability. If a student is allowed to return to the MAT program, the student will abide by the policies in the Student Handbook and College Catalog at the time of program reentry. Any MAT program student who has withdrawn or been suspended from the

program and subsequently returns must meet the standards and curriculum requirements in effect when they are readmitted.

Reinstatement Requirements:

1. Receipt of the completed reinstatement form by the admission committee deadline
2. Cumulative GPA of 2.0
3. Minimum grade of "C" in all required courses
4. Satisfactory level of mental and physical health, including current immunizations, ability to meet the MAT program's essential functions, current CPR certification, negative drug screen and background check, current TB test, and documentation of health insurance *before* enrolling in a MAT preceptorship/clinical course (MAT 125, MAT 230, MAT 239, NAS 100).
5. Ability to meet and comply with standards and policies in the current College Catalog and Student Handbook
6. Reinstatement must occur within one year from the last MAT course, or the student must reapply to the program as a new student.

Process for Reinstatement:

1. Students should schedule an appointment with the Health Sciences advisor to discuss eligibility for reinstatement.
2. Students must apply for reinstatement to the MAT program by the published deadlines. Students who submit applications after the deadline may be considered at the next course availability.
3. Students must apply for readmission to the College if they are not currently enrolled.
4. Students who have been out of the MAT program for more than one semester must repeat their criminal background check and drug testing.
5. Students must update immunizations and other health records as required for clinical experiences.

TRANSFER POLICY

The number of faculty and clinical facilities available limits the acceptance of transfer students into the MAT program. Meeting minimal requirements does not guarantee acceptance. Verification of cognitive, psychomotor, and affective objectives will be required.

Students wishing to transfer must:

1. Complete the application for entry into Southern Union Community College's MAT Program within one year from the last program-specific course.
2. Meet the entry and progression requirements of Southern Union State Community College and the MAT Program.
3. Enter Southern Union State Community College with a clear academic status with a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.0 in all previous college coursework.
4. Provide evidence that all required general education and program-specific courses taken at another institution are completed with a grade of C or higher.
 - a. Alabama Community College System's Medical Assistant Technology

curriculum courses will transfer without review of the course syllabus.

b. Medical assisting or other allied health courses from any other institution are accepted only after a review by the accepting institution to ensure content consistency. Transcripts are evaluated on an individual basis for the application of program-specific credit.

5. Provide a letter of current standing and proof of eligibility to return to the previous allied health program indicated by a letter of recommendation from the Dean/Director of the previous program.
6. Meet criteria for placement at clinical agencies for preceptorship experiences by fulfilling all health record requirements, including required drug testing and background checks.
7. Meet and comply with standards and policies in the College Catalog and Student Handbook current at the time of transfer.

Students pursuing short-term certificates (29 credit hours or less) must complete all credit hours required in the MAT program at Southern Union State Community College. Students pursuing certificate options (30-60 credit hours) or degree options must complete at least 25% of the total semester credit hours required at Southern Union State Community College.

ADMINISTRATIVE WITHDRAWAL

A student may be dropped administratively from any course for

1. Failure to complete college registration correctly;
2. Failure to fulfill conditions of registration in those cases when a student may have been allowed to register on a conditional basis;
3. Falsification of application and/or records such as health insurance.
4. Failure to fulfill other conditions of admission and/or registration;
5. Failure to comply with student conduct standards;
6. Failure to attend class(es); and
7. Failure to comply with "Standards or Scope of Practice" as established by any regulatory or licensing agency for programs of study in the Health Sciences Division

ACADEMIC POLICIES AND STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

RESPONSIBILITY IN TEACHING AND LEARNING

The primary purpose of instruction is to promote student learning. Instructors facilitate and direct all matters dealing with courses. Instructors do not bear the sole responsibility for students' education. Students must follow the instructor's guidance, study, do homework, and prepare for class to master the information and skills taught. Students cannot expect a good grade in a course without putting in several hours of studying for each hour of scheduled class time. The recommended amount of student time is two hours per day for each hour of class. Extra-curricular activities, including jobs, will not affect teachers' expectations and should not interfere with students' class preparation. Instructors should use their expertise and experience to prepare and present the course material in the best possible way. Teachers (*anyone* who teaches) will do their best to provide a disciplined yet comfortable and supportive classroom environment. They will encourage questions and questioning, although students should remember that insight often comes from struggling with a problem rather than being given the answer.

The students hold the ultimate responsibility for learning. Although faculty members will teach, guide, assist, and encourage, learning is the student's responsibility. Learning is hard work, and full-time students should consider "studenting" to be a full-time job. The College's primary priority is its students. While students pay tuition to attend school, the tuition provides the student access to the expertise of the faculty members. Students are responsible for evaluating their instructors honestly and candidly to contribute to each teacher's effectiveness and professional growth.

PARTICIPATION IN THE PROGRAM OF LEARNING

Students can participate in the program's development, conduct, and evaluation. Students may contribute through semester evaluations of coursework and instructors, participation in faculty meetings, and evaluation of the program and curriculum after MAT Program completion. End-of-semester evaluations are distributed to all MAT students and solicit anonymous comments regarding course content, instructors, instructional tools, assigned coursework, and examinations. End-of-semester conferences/evaluations with faculty provide students an opportunity for one-on-one feedback. Further, students evaluate the entire curriculum after completing the MAT program. Additionally, faculty may invite MAT students to serve as non-voting representatives on discipline-specific committees.

COURSE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM AND WEB-BASED MATERIALS

Courses in the Health Sciences division are supplemented using the course management system known as Canvas. Students must access these materials as outlined in the course syllabus. Computers are available in the Learning Resource Center for printing for students who do not have a computer at home. Course material will not be available on Canvas after the conclusion of the semester.

COURSE SYLLABI

Each health science course has a syllabus that is the student-teacher agreement for that specific

course. The syllabus will be available online through Canvas. The syllabus contains the course objectives, each of which must be achieved to pass the course. The document also includes the requirements of the course and the evaluation methods. The student should be sure to understand the expectations of the course thoroughly. If you have questions or need clarification, make an appointment with the faculty member. Syllabi are projections of activities that will take place over several months; however, teachers may modify activities to fit unforeseen circumstances. Changes will be announced in class or provided in writing via the course management system Canvas.

COMPUTER LABS AND INTERNET

Use of Southern Union State Community College's computers to access software or information on the internet indicates that the user will comply, both in letter and spirit, with the policies established for the College's computer labs. Students are not to reconfigure, load, download, copy, delete, or in any way alter the software programs or computer configurations. Internet access is limited to instructional purposes and is not to be used for entertainment. The user must be aware that information retrieved from the internet may not have been verified, validated, or authenticated by an appropriately credentialed source to assure its accuracy. Information accessed on the internet or other computer software available is to be used professionally and responsibly. Southern Union State Community College is not responsible for information that is considered offensive in nature or is misused by the user. Information accessed on the internet is not to be used for illegal purposes and is not to be used to transmit threatening, obscene, pornographic, or harassing materials. Users of the internet are not to interfere with or disrupt network users, services, or equipment. Disruptions include, but are not limited to, unsolicited advertising, propagation of computer worms or viruses, and using the network to make unauthorized entry to other machines accessible via the network.

Southern Union State Community College and The Alabama Supercomputer Authority reserve the right to monitor and review all traffic for potential violations of this policy, and these agencies have final authority for determining violations and subsequent penalties. Penalties may include, but are not limited to, disciplinary action by the College.

Use of Computer Labs

1. Software is not to be loaded, unloaded, downloaded, or reconfigured.
2. Computers are not to be turned off while a program is running.
3. Food, drink, and children are not allowed in computer labs.
4. Computer space must be cleaned up before leaving the lab.

ACCESS TO INSTRUCTORS/ TUTORING

Students can meet with their instructors during designated office hours/ tutoring hours. Instructors post office hours outside each faculty member's office and in the Canvas course. Students must schedule appointments with faculty at a mutually convenient time for both the student and faculty. Both parties should keep these appointments. If circumstances prevent this, the person unable to make the appointment should contact the other and attempt to reschedule.

COMMUNICATION CHANNELS AND CHAIN OF COMMAND

Should a problem arise during the semester, you should first strive to solve it with the instructor or student involved. If you cannot agree, you should then consult the course coordinator. If this does not solve the issue, you should make an appointment with the MAT Program Director. The student may consult the Dean of Health Sciences if the problem remains unsolved.

ATTENDANCE POLICY AND TARDINESS

Students are expected to attend all classes for which they are registered. Each student should recognize at the beginning of their college career that mature acceptance of academic responsibilities is required to succeed in college; this applies especially to class attendance. Students are responsible for the knowledge, skills, and abilities they miss due to absences, as well as for assignments made or due from the first day of class. Any missed class sessions, regardless of cause, reduce the student's academic opportunities. When a student is absent, the student is responsible for all announcements, content covered in class, and any assignments made in class. The instructor is not required to review any material missed due to absence, nor is the instructor required to notify a student if the student is in danger of a lowered grade due to missed graded work. The instructor is not required to provide an opportunity for make-up work. The instructor's make-up work policies shall be clearly defined in the syllabus and available on the first day of class. The student should refer to individual course syllabi for course policies and procedures. A student may be dropped administratively from any course for failure to attend class(es) when the student has missed more than 20% of the total number of hours the class meets. The number of absences resulting in administrative withdrawal may differ in programs that lead to board licensure or certification.

COURSE EVALUATION AND GRADING

A minimum grade of "C" in theory (75 or above) and "satisfactory" preceptorship/lab performance are required to complete the course.

Letter grades will be assigned using this scale:

A=Excellent (90–100); B=Good (80–89); C=Average (75–79); D=Poor (60–74); F=Failure (59–below); I=Incomplete

Individual test grades are not rounded to the next higher score. For example, 76.2 and 77.8 would be recorded as the test grades. Passing final course grades will be rounded. For example, an A will be recorded if the grade is 89.69.

Students must pass **ALL** components of the course to progress to the next course. This includes didactic (cognitive) competencies and required skills lab assignments and skills (psychomotor and affective), including on-campus activities and virtual simulations. If the student does not complete all components of the course, including didactic (cognitive) and skills lab (psychomotor, affective), this will result in a **course failure**.

The student must successfully complete **ALL** required psychomotor and affective competencies. Satisfactory completion is defined by a score of 85% or higher on the designated activity. The

student will have two attempts to successfully complete each competency before they receive an unsatisfactory for that particular competency. If a student is unsuccessful after two attempts, this will result in a **course failure**.

TESTING POLICY

Southern Union State Community College's MAT Program students will be required to take tests throughout the curriculum. Students must take the exams at assigned times or make arrangements in advance (not the day of the test) with the faculty member. All exams are monitored.

COMPUTERIZED TESTING

Students must arrive at the computer laboratory or designated location at the designated time. Students may not enter the testing area before the scheduled testing time begins. No food or drinks are allowed in computer laboratories. Students may only bring a pencil and a basic calculator. If paper is needed, faculty members will supply you with a blank sheet to be handed in after the test. No cell phones or hand-held devices are allowed at your workstation. Place personal belongings at the front or side of the classroom. Students may access only the test in progress. No other programs or internet applications should be open on the taskbar or used during testing. Once the test is complete and submitted, the student may review the test if allowed by the faculty member. Once the test is complete, the student will end the testing session and exit the computer laboratory. Students may not check e-mail or navigate the internet during or after the test. ANY violation of this policy will result in a student referral to the Dean of Students for violation of the Academic Integrity policy.

MAKE-UP TESTS

If you are unable to take an exam at the scheduled date and time, you are expected to notify the instructor before the exam. If a student fails to notify the instructor before the scheduled exam time, the student must submit an appeal and documentation supporting the absence to the Admission Progression Committee to request permission to make up the missed exam. Make-up exams are at the instructor's discretion and are not guaranteed. Make-up tests may be administered in a different format from the original exam at the instructor's discretion. Students may take only **ONE** make-up test per semester.

TEST REVIEW

Test results will only be reviewed immediately after the test is given or as scheduled by the faculty member. Students will not be allowed to review tests at the end of the semester to challenge the answers to questions for points. Students who wish to challenge a test question must do so **within one business day** of the test. Students who challenge test questions must do so in **writing to** the Course Faculty with documentation as the reason for the challenge.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND STUDENT ACADEMIC HONESTY

The awarding of a college degree attests that an individual has demonstrated mastery of a significant body of knowledge and skills of substantive value to society. Therefore, any dishonesty in securing those credentials invites severe sanctions. Examples of dishonesty include actual or attempted cheating, plagiarism, or knowingly furnishing false information to any college

employee. Plagiarism is defined as submitting anything for credit in one course that has already been offered for credit in another class or copying any part of someone else's intellectual work – their ideas and/or words – published or unpublished, including that of other students, and portraying it as one's own. Proper quoting, using APA formatting (current edition), is required. Students must properly cite any quoted material. No plagiarism will be tolerated in any person's work, including that of another student. Work submitted to faculty must be the original work of the particular student. This policy also includes giving faculty false information about a student's use of another student's past paperwork in a class and fraudulent student preceptorship activities, including but not limited to clinical experiences or preceptorship hours. If a student knowingly submits false information, they will receive the grade of "F" for the course. The MAT Program Director and program instructors do not tolerate any form of cheating. If a student cheats during testing or on a required activity, they will receive a "zero" for that activity and may receive a grade of "F" for the course.

Violations of the Academic Honesty Code include but are not limited to the following:

- Looking at another student's paper during an assessment or communicating in any way with anyone other than the test administrator/faculty/proctor
- Using unauthorized materials and/or devices in the preparation of any assignments or the taking of any tests or examinations
- Having in the immediate testing area materials or devices not expressly authorized by the test administrator
- Accepting or providing unauthorized assistance in the preparation of assignments or the taking of any tests and examinations
- Submitting as your work essays, term papers, lab reports, or other projects that others have prepared
- Obtaining, possessing, or gaining knowledge or answers to a current test or assignment before it has been distributed to the class and without the knowledge and consent of the instructor;
- Gaining, without authorization, access to the work of another student. For example, accessing the computer file of another student)
- Plagiarizing (presenting as one's own the ideas, data, and/or works of another)
- Inventing data or information in the preparation of assignments except when such invention is expressly authorized
- Violating supplementary academic honesty codes adopted and approved in individual divisions of the College and distributed to students within those divisions

If the incident is referred to the Dean of Students, suspension or expulsion from the college may result. These "Standards of Conduct" apply to all students regardless of their learning mode, including distance education students. If an instructor determines that a student has cheated on an exam or has committed plagiarism, a grade of zero "0" will be assigned for that exam or assignment. Further disciplinary action will be taken at the discretion of the Dean of Students. Tests may not be duplicated in any form, including but not limited to handwritten, photocopy, video, or tape recording. Portable electronic devices, including cameras, iPods, PDAs, smartwatches, or cell phones, must not be visible during exams or scheduled exam reviews.

Turn off cell phones or set them to silent mode. Students must not have electronic devices in their possession during testing.

The Southern Union State Community College Health Sciences Division does not exercise control over students' private conduct. However, when a group of students or an individual student acts as a recognized representative of a Southern Union Health Sciences Program or participates in an off-campus activity sponsored by the Health Sciences Division, the student must maintain appropriate standards of conduct. Any conduct by a student shall be subject to review and appropriate action taken by the Health Sciences Division whenever it appears that the conduct has resulted in a hindrance or restriction of educational purposes or processes of the Health Sciences Division or when that conduct demonstrates a threat to the safety and well-being of others.

If the student demonstrates patterns of behavior that constitute unprofessional conduct or that encroach on the student's ability to fulfill their responsibilities as a student at any time while training or fulfilling responsibilities as a Southern Union State Community College student, appropriate corrective action, including suspension or expulsion from the Health Science program, will result. Such behavior is defined to include but is not necessarily limited to any of the following:

- failure of a student to notify appropriate persons of absence from scheduled learning experiences
- dishonesty in interactions with staff or instructors
- failure to adhere to the established dress code
- unsafe practices; the use of inappropriate language
- being consistently late in fulfilling scheduled responsibilities
- failure to fulfill appointments
- failure to maintain confidentiality in matters related to educational responsibilities
- inappropriate behavior while in uniform
- unprofessional conduct while representing Southern Union State Community College within the preceptorship setting, skills laboratory, simulation center, professional meetings, or community outreaches

Demonstrating severe physiological or psychological disorders that interfere with a student's ability to fulfill academic responsibilities or infringe on the student's future ability to perform professional duties will be cause for appropriate corrective action, including referral to an appropriate agency for professional diagnosis and treatment. Failure or refusal to cooperate in this endeavor can result in suspension or expulsion from the MAT program.

Abuse of alcohol that interferes with a student's ability to fulfill academic or professional responsibilities in the Health Science program or the illegal use of other drugs and substances will result in suspension or expulsion from the MAT program.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) USE POLICY

Artificial intelligence (AI) tools, including generative AI applications, may provide valuable

educational support when used appropriately. Because MAT Program students work with confidential patient information and prepare for professional practice in healthcare, AI use must comply with academic integrity standards, patient privacy requirements, HIPAA, and applicable college and clinical-site policies.

Students may use AI tools for educational purposes when the course instructor permits it and its use does not replace the student's own learning, clinical judgment, or required work. Appropriate uses may include:

- Brainstorming ideas for an assignment or presentation.
- Generating study questions or practice questions.
- Requesting explanations of general medical or academic concepts.
- Creating study guides from information that does not contain confidential or identifying information.
- Reviewing grammar, spelling, or organization of a student's original work.
- Using AI as a supplemental learning resource when preparing for examinations or certification exams.
- Asking AI to explain a general concept in a different way to improve understanding.

Faculty may establish additional or more restrictive AI requirements for individual courses, assignments, examinations, laboratory activities, or clinical experiences. Students are responsible for following the AI requirements stated in each course syllabus and assignment.

Students must never enter, upload, submit, or otherwise provide confidential, protected, or identifiable patient information to an AI tool. Prohibited information includes, but is not limited to:

- Patient names or initials when they could identify the patient.
- Dates of birth.
- Medical record numbers.
- Social Security numbers.
- Addresses, telephone numbers, or email addresses.
- Patient photographs, videos, or recordings.
- Clinical documentation containing identifying information.
- Laboratory, diagnostic, or treatment information that could reasonably identify a patient.
- Information obtained from an electronic health record.
- Information obtained from a clinical site that is confidential or proprietary.
- Any combination of information that could reasonably be used to identify a patient.

Students are also prohibited from using AI to generate, alter, or complete clinical documentation, patient records, or other documentation that the student is required to complete independently unless specifically authorized by the instructor or clinical site.

AI-generated work submitted as a student's own work may constitute academic dishonesty when AI use is not permitted or when the student fails to appropriately acknowledge its use. Students are responsible for the accuracy, originality, and integrity of all work submitted for academic credit.

Faculty may require students to:

- Disclose the use of AI in an assignment.
- Provide the prompts or questions used with an AI tool.
- Submit drafts or other evidence demonstrating their own work.
- Complete an assignment without AI assistance.
- Demonstrate their understanding of material through discussion, examination, demonstration, or other assessment.

Use of AI does not relieve students of responsibility for verifying information. AI tools can produce inaccurate, incomplete, outdated, or misleading information. Students remain responsible for the accuracy of information submitted for academic credit.

AI tools are not a substitute for professional judgment, faculty instruction, clinical supervision, or established healthcare resources. Students may not rely on AI as the sole source of information for patient care decisions or clinical procedures.

During clinical experiences, students must follow the clinical facility's policies and procedures and the direction of the clinical preceptor, faculty member, and other authorized healthcare professionals. Students should not independently use AI to make or recommend patient-care decisions.

Violation of this policy may result in academic or disciplinary action consistent with Southern Union State Community College policies and the Medical Assistant Technology Program Student Handbook. Consequences may include assignment failure, examination failure, remediation, disciplinary action, removal from a clinical experience, or dismissal from the program, depending on the nature and severity of the violation. A violation involving patient information may also violate HIPAA, clinical-site policy, or other applicable laws or regulations.

Students are responsible for understanding and following the AI requirements established by the College, the MAT Program, individual instructors, and clinical agencies. When there is uncertainty about whether AI use is permitted for a particular activity, students must ask the instructor before using AI. The absence of a specific prohibition in an assignment does not automatically mean that AI use is permitted. Faculty may restrict or prohibit AI use for any assignment, examination, laboratory activity, or clinical-related activity when necessary to evaluate student learning, protect patient information, or maintain academic and professional standards.

APPEAL POLICY

The College has established a grade appeal procedure to be used if a student has a valid reason to believe that a grade they received for an examination, a written/oral presentation, a clinical, a lab, or a project is inaccurate or an inaccurate grade has influenced the final average in the class. All students will follow the same procedure, whether enrolled in courses held on campus in a traditional classroom setting or courses delivered via distance learning formats. Formal appeals are only accepted when a student believes the instructor did not assign the grade correctly based on the syllabus guidelines. Students may also appeal the final grade in the class if they think it is inaccurate due to a calculation error. Students may access the “Academic Grade Appeal

Procedure” policy within the Interactive College Handbook available on Southern Union State Community College’s website.

PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT AND STUDENT EXPECTATIONS

MAT PROGRAM DISCIPLINE POLICY

Fundamental attributes of ethical and professional behavior include, but are not limited to, honesty, integrity, civility, a demonstrated desire to learn, respect for the academic process, concern for the welfare of patients and their families, commitment to patient confidentiality, respect for the rights of others, emotional maturity, and self-discipline. Because the development of professional and practice behaviors is an essential component of medical assisting education, demonstrating such conduct throughout your training is considered an academic requirement.

Professionalism is a cornerstone of the Medical Assistant Technology Program. It supports a safe and compassionate healthcare environment, promotes integrity in the delivery of patient care, and fosters a collegial and accountable healthcare team.

Circumstances may arise during a student's course of study that call into question the student's capacity or commitment to maintain these standards. SUSCC is responsible for determining a student's continued eligibility in the program. By accepting admission to the SUSCC Medical Assistant Technology Program, students commit to complying with all published rules and expectations, including those related to professional and practice behaviors.

All MAT program students are expected to demonstrate high standards of professional behavior and clinical practice in all educational environments, including but not limited to the classroom, skills laboratory, simulation laboratory, preceptorship sites, and any time the student is in uniform or representing SUSCC.

A **behavior violation** is issued when a student's actions are inappropriate, unsafe, unprofessional, or inconsistent with expected performance standards. Depending on severity, a violation may be escalated at the discretion of the MAT program faculty. All violations are documented and remain in the student's program file.

LEVEL 1 - Professional Behaviors

Each Level 1 violation results in a student conference with the course faculty and the addition of documentation to the student's MAT Program file. Any student receiving **three (3)** Level 1 professional behavior violations during a semester will be administratively withdrawn from their enrolled MAT course(s). If this withdrawal occurs during the student's first semester in the MAT program, the student must apply to the program as a new student. If the student is in their second semester and beyond, the student can apply for program reinstatement. If reinstated, previous Level 1 violations do not carry forward.

Examples of Level 1 Professional Behavior Violations

1. Undocumented (unexcused) absence from a scheduled exam
2. Lack of punctuality to class, lab, or simulation
3. Distracting, unprofessional, or insensitive behavior in class, lab, or clinical settings

4. Being unprepared for lab/clinical (incomplete assignments, missing required documents, incomplete health records)
5. Failure to meet published deadlines
6. Violation of uniform or appearance guidelines
7. Breach of simulation scenario confidentiality
8. Failure to provide appropriate notice of tardiness or absence from the assigned lab or clinical/preceptorship experience

LEVEL 2 - Clinical Practice Behaviors

Any student who receives two (2) Level 2 clinical practice behavior violations will receive a failing (F) grade in the course. The student will be administratively withdrawn from all concurrent courses measuring MAT-specific competencies.

Examples of Level 2 Clinical Practice Behavior Violations

1. Failure to provide appropriate advance notice of tardiness or absence from the scheduled lab or clinical/preceptorship experience
2. Charting or reporting completion of tasks, procedures, or medical orders that were not actually performed
3. Failure to report errors to the MAT program faculty or clinical site preceptor
4. Assuming responsibilities or performing skills without proper instruction, validation, or outside the medical assistant's scope of practice
5. Failure to meet patient care responsibilities
6. Lack of professional demeanor (offensive language or gestures, negative attitude, lack of engagement)
7. Written, verbal, or otherwise abusive or uncivil behavior toward others
8. Violation of clinical facility site policies or procedures
9. Verified complaint from facility staff
10. Level 1 HIPAA violation
11. Unsafe practice or behavior that poses potential harm to a patient, staff member, or fellow student

LEVEL 3 - Critical Behaviors

One (1) Level 3 violation results in program dismissal and a failing (F) grade for the course.

Examples of Level 3 Critical Behavior Violations

1. Unsafe practice or behavior that results in actual harm to a patient, staff member, or another student
2. Evidence of drug or alcohol use during scheduled school, lab, or clinical activities
3. Diverting or attempting to divert medications or medical supplies in the clinical setting
4. Negligence or refusal to perform assigned medical assisting duties, or failure to act in the best interest of the patient
5. Academic dishonesty or conduct reflecting a lack of professional integrity, including cheating, plagiarism, or presenting others' work as one's own
6. Level 2 or Level 3 HIPAA violation
7. Physically abusive behavior toward others

8. Engaging in discriminatory, harassing, or retaliatory behavior
9. Falsifying patient records, clinical paperwork, vital signs, or any documentation used for evaluation or patient care
10. Tampering with clinical equipment, safety devices, or emergency systems in a way that compromises student, patient, or staff safety
11. Intentional destruction, misuse, or theft of property belonging to the College, clinical facility, staff, patients, or peers

COURSE/CLINICAL FAILURE

If a student has one (1) unsuccessful course attempt (D, F, or W), they are eligible to apply for program reinstatement. However, a total of two (2) unsuccessful course attempts (D, F, or W) within the MAT program will result in dismissal from the program.

A single course or preceptorship failure may result from Level 2 or Level 3 behavior violations. Students who receive a course or preceptorship failure before the published withdrawal date will still receive a failing grade (F) upon earning the violation. Withdrawal from the course will not be permitted.

If a course or preceptorship failure results from Level 2 or Level 3 behavior violations, students enrolled in multiple courses will be administratively withdrawn from all concurrent courses measuring MAT-specific competencies.

Students may apply for reinstatement, if desired, after a course failure secondary to Level 2 violations. If reinstated, Level 2 violations do carry forward into future semesters. Please see the "Reinstatement into the MAT Program" policy for further guidance.

Level 3 violations result in both a course failure and MAT program dismissal, rendering the student ineligible for program reinstatement. If continuation in the MAT program is desired, students in this scenario will be required to complete a new student application to the MAT program. No credit would be awarded for previously taken courses that measure MAT-specific competencies.

To maintain academic standards and program integrity, a student may be admitted as a new student to SUSCC's MAT program a maximum of two (2) times.

HARASSMENT AND DISCRIMINATION

Southern Union State Community College is committed to protecting its students, staff, and visitors from harassment, intimidation, and exploitation as prohibited by Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and Title VII (Section 703) of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Harassment includes but is not necessarily limited to slurs, jokes, or other verbal, graphic, or physical conduct relating to an individual's race, color, gender, religion, national origin, age, or disability. Harassment also includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal, graphic, or physical conduct of a sexual nature. Sexual harassment refers to the behavior of a sexual nature that interferes with the work or education of its victims and their co-

workers or fellow students. Sexual harassment may involve the behavior of a person of either sex against a person of the opposite sex when:

- submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment or educational opportunities;
- submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as the basis for employment or academic decisions affecting that individual;
- such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work or academic performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work or educational environment.

Harassment of employees or students by an employer, other employees, other students, or non-employees violates this policy. Any person who believes themselves to be subjected to such harassment, intimidation, or exploitation should first tell the person responsible to stop the action. In addition, the person should contact a College official (faculty member or staff member) as promptly as possible after the harassment occurs. The College official will take appropriate action to resolve the complaint.

It is the official policy of the Alabama State Department of Education and Southern Union State Community College that no person in Alabama shall, on the grounds of race, color, disability, gender, religion, creed, national origin, or age, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program, activity or employment.

Southern Union State Community College complies with non-discriminatory regulations under Title VI, Title VII, and Title IX of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; Title IX Educational Amendment of 1972; and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990.

Direct inquiries about this policy to the ADA Coordinator at ext. 5488. Grievance Procedure Forms are available online at www.suscc.edu.

PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATION

Effective communication is essential to professional practice in healthcare. MAT Program students are expected to communicate with faculty, staff, classmates, patients, clinical partners, and other healthcare professionals respectfully, professionally, and appropriately. Students are expected to demonstrate communication skills consistent with the standards of the medical assisting profession in all program-related settings.

Students are expected to:

- Communicate with faculty and staff in a professional, respectful, and courteous manner.
- Use their Southern Union State Community College student email account for official college and program communication unless otherwise directed.
- Include their full name and, when appropriate, the course number or program-related topic in electronic communications.

- Use appropriate grammar, spelling, punctuation, and professional language in emails and other written communication.
- Review course syllabi and other program communications before contacting faculty with questions about information that has already been provided.
- Allow reasonable time for faculty to respond to questions and requests.
- Follow the established MAT Program chain of command when addressing questions, concerns, or complaints.
- Schedule appointments when a matter requires an extended discussion or cannot be appropriately addressed through email.

Email is an official means of communication within the MAT Program. Students are responsible for regularly monitoring their college email and other designated course communication systems. Students should not expect an immediate response to emails. Faculty may establish specific communication hours and response-time expectations in their course syllabi.

Students should not delay contacting faculty about important academic or clinical matters until the deadline or due date. An assignment deadline does not create an expectation of immediate or after-hours faculty availability. Faculty are not required to respond to routine student emails outside their designated communication hours, including evenings, weekends, holidays, or college closures. Students should plan accordingly and seek clarification well in advance of assignment, examination, or clinical deadlines.

Students must communicate professionally with patients, clinical preceptors, faculty, healthcare providers, and other clinical personnel. Students are expected to:

- Introduce themselves appropriately and identify themselves as MAT students when interacting with patients.
- Use respectful and professional language.
- Demonstrate active listening.
- Maintain appropriate professional boundaries.
- Communicate patient information only through authorized channels and in accordance with HIPAA and clinical-site policies.
- Follow the chain of command established by the MAT Program and clinical facility.
- Address concerns or questions about patient care to the appropriate supervising healthcare professional.
- Never argue with, challenge, or undermine clinical personnel in the presence of patients.
- Immediately report patient safety concerns to the appropriate clinical supervisor and faculty member.
- Maintain professionalism even when disagreements or difficult situations arise.

Students are expected to maintain professionalism in all forms of communication, including:

- Face-to-face conversations
- Telephone calls
- Email
- Text messages

- Learning management system communications
- Video conferencing
- Social media
- Written assignments
- Group messaging
- Communication with clinical agencies

Communication that is threatening, hostile, disrespectful, intimidating, discriminatory, harassing, profane, or otherwise unprofessional is not acceptable. Students are expected to address disagreements appropriately and professionally. Concerns should be communicated directly to the appropriate faculty or administrator rather than discussed publicly, posted on social media, or communicated in a manner that disrupts the learning or clinical environment.

Students must protect the privacy and confidentiality of patients, classmates, faculty, clinical personnel, and the College. Students may not disclose confidential or protected information through email, text messages, social media, artificial intelligence tools, or other electronic communication platforms. Students must comply with the MAT Program's HIPAA and Patient Confidentiality Policy, clinical-site confidentiality requirements, and applicable College policies.

Professional communication is an essential component of clinical competence. Failure to communicate professionally may result in counseling, remediation, removal from a classroom or clinical activity, disciplinary action, or other consequences consistent with College and MAT Program policies. Serious or repeated violations may result in dismissal from a clinical site or the MAT Program.

ELECTRONIC DEVICE USE

Personal digital assistants (PDAs), cellular phones, and smart devices, including watches and tablets, are not allowed during testing. The use of electronic devices, including but not limited to the iPod, iPhone, and Droid, in healthcare settings is only permitted if the student uses the device as a clinical aide. While these devices can be a great asset to the student, the student must realize the boundaries needed to maintain HIPAA compliance and professionalism. At healthcare sites, taking photographs, texting, using personal e-mail, and using social networking sites, including but not limited to Facebook, Snapchat, Twitter, and TikTok, are strictly prohibited. Southern Union State Community College's HIPAA policy will apply to using these electronic devices in the clinical setting. Taking a picture during preceptorship is considered a violation of HIPAA. The taping of the lecture may be allowed for studying purposes. Students are not allowed to retransmit whole or portions of lectures without the explicit consent of the instructor. Examples of transmission include, but are not limited to, posting lectures on websites (including YouTube, Facebook, etc.) and the dispersion of copies of recorded lectures.

SOCIAL NETWORKING AND SOCIAL MEDIA

This policy is non-limiting and covers any site that facilitates social networking, including but not limited to Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram, LinkedIn, Twitter, and TikTok. Students should use social media cautiously and avoid disclosing any information that could be considered confidential

patient information. Any intentional or unintentional disclosure of information that could lead to identifying a patient will result in appropriate disciplinary actions up to suspension from the College. Removal of an individual's name, face, or image is insufficient to protect the identity or confidential information. Using privacy settings on many social networking sites does not guarantee that information will not appear in public and is thus not deemed sufficient to protect the patient's protected health information. Students should not make negative, disparaging, or unprofessional remarks about fellow students, instructors, patients, patient visitors, preceptorship sites, or other healthcare professionals through social media. Any negative or disparaging statements, intentional or unintentional, through social media will be considered unprofessional and a form of misconduct. This type of misconduct will be subject to appropriate disciplinary actions. A violation of this policy will result in appropriate disciplinary action up to and including suspension from the college.

The student should abide by the following guidelines:

- Do not save confidential, identifying, or sensitive patient information on your personal computer or other electronic devices.
- Maintain confidentiality during E-mail or texting correspondence with faculty and do not include protected health information.
- Do not transmit any patient-related information or images through social media. Do not take pictures or videos of patients or record discussions with cell phones or other personal devices.
- Limiting access through privacy settings is not deemed sufficient to protect the privacy and confidentiality of information. There is no such thing as a "private" social media site.
- Comply with healthcare agency regulations regarding using computers, cameras, electronic devices, and cell phones while present in the healthcare agency.
- Maintain patient privacy and confidentiality at all times.
- Report breaches of confidentiality or privacy to the appropriate discipline instructor promptly.

HEALTH INSURANCE PORTABILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY ACT OF 1996

Title II of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 requires protecting all identifiable health information. This protected health information must be kept confidential, whether electronic, paper, or oral. To comply with HIPAA, the Southern Union State Community College Health Sciences Program requires all PDAs (iPod Touch, iPhones, etc.) to be password-protected and all information to be de-identified. Because of the seriousness of this policy, HIPAA violations will be considered a severe offense, and the consequences will be severe.

All patient/client information is confidential. Protecting patient confidentiality is the law. The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) of 1996 was enacted in April 2003. Noncompliance can result in monetary, civil, and criminal penalties.

Southern Union State Community College Health Science division takes HIPAA violations very

seriously. To help preserve patient confidentiality, levels of HIPAA violations have been developed and will be strictly enforced for every student who is enrolled in Health Science courses at Southern Union. This policy consists of three levels of violations, with repercussions outlined in each level.

Records of student violations of the SUSCC Confidentiality/ HIPAA policy will be maintained in the student's health science file.

LEVEL 1: Constitutes an act of negligence.

Examples of a level one violation include but are not limited to:

- Leaving patient information unattended.
- Turning in assignments with a patient's name attached
- Sharing passwords with other classmates.
- Not signing off of a computer in the preceptorship setting.
- Not password-protecting any personal device that is used to record patient information

A Level 1 violation will result in a reprimand (STA, Preceptorship unsatisfactory, etc.) and counseling by an instructor. A Level 1 violation **carries** over to subsequent semesters.

LEVEL 2: Repeat violation of a level one incident within the **same semester** or **subsequent semester** in a Health Science program (does not have to be the same incident) will result in a level two violation. Intentional violation of the SUSCC Confidentiality/ HIPAA policy.

Examples of a level 2 violation include but are not limited to:

- Unauthorized access to patient records.
- The discussion of the Patient's, the Patient's family, and/or visitors' information with others not involved in the patient's care
- Discussing the patient's, the patient's family's, and/or visitors' information on social media sites
- Discussing the Patient's, the Patient's family, and/or visitor's information where others not involved in the direct care of the patient may overhear your conversation.
- Sharing/Discussing the identity of a Patient, the Patient's family, and/or visitors outside of the preceptorship setting, even if not discussing information regarding their care.

The level 2 violation will result in the student receiving a preceptorship failure for the course in which the offense occurred. Additionally, the student will be academically withdrawn from all health science courses. The student must complete the application process for possible readmission to the program. This offense will stay in the student's permanent file. If readmitted to a health science program, any further violation of the SUSCC HIPAA policy

will automatically move the student to a Level 3 violation.

LEVEL 3: Additional violation of the SUSCC Confidentiality/ HIPAA policy after already receiving a Level 2 violation. Or a malicious offense used to cause harm to a person, or used for personal gain.

The level 3 violation will result in student receiving a preceptorship failure for the course that the offense took part in. Additionally the student will be academically withdrawn from all health science courses. The student will not have the option of returning to that program or any program of study in the Health science division.

The following are some general guidelines for students regarding HIPAA compliance:

- Students should not discuss patient/client information with anyone except for preceptorship personnel and those in the Health Science program who are involved in your education and adhere to the same confidentiality (e.g., faculty, graduate colleagues).
- Client records should never leave the healthcare agency.
- Students should never save patient/client sensitive information (with identifying information) on their computers.
- E-mail correspondence with faculty should also be treated confidentially and identifying information about patients/clients should not be included.
- All documentation related to preceptorship clients must be treated as a legal document and confidentiality must be respected and maintained.
- Client names should not be included in preceptorship paperwork, case presentations, or on notes.
- Photocopying of client records is **NOT** permitted in any preceptorship setting.
- Records should not have client's names or initials when turned in for preceptorship paperwork
- Students should NEVER discuss ANY information, no matter how insignificant it may seem, on any social media site.
- For more information regarding HIPAA, please visit <http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/privacy/>
- All violations of the SUSCC confidentiality/ HIPAA will remain active for two years after the incident or until the completion of the currently enrolled program (whichever is longer) regardless of the program. The active violation will transfer to any Health Science program from any other Health Science program.

VIDEO RECORDING AND PHOTOGRAPHY

Southern Union State Community College develops and implements events and initiatives to promote the college's overall well-being, create awareness of the college's mission, history, and contributions to the region, and foster positive relationships with prospective students, alumni,

and friends of the college. Public relations and marketing activities include but are not limited to distributing press releases and news stories concerning college activities, developing and distributing publications regarding the College's mission and programs, participating in community activities, and designing and implementing marketing material for print and electronic media. Any student wishing not to be video recorded or have photographs taken during events or initiatives must notify the staff/faculty before the scheduled event date.

SKILLS LAB, SIMULATION, AND CLINICAL EDUCATION

ELIGIBILITY FOR CLINICAL ROTATIONS

Southern Union is contractually obligated to comply with requirements set forth by agencies used for clinical rotations. All Health Science students must complete background checks and drug screens to meet clinical agency requirements under The Joint Commission (JC) standards. Background checks and drug screens will be conducted by one vendor approved by the Health Care Agencies, Division Chair and/or Dean of Health Sciences. Background checks or drug screens conducted by any vendor or agency that is not approved will not be allowed. Clear background check results must be received before newly admitted or returning Health Science students can register for courses. Students who have been out of the Health Science program sequence for one semester must repeat the criminal background check and drug screen. The student is responsible for paying for all background and drug screens required by the clinical agencies. Some clinical settings may require a separate background check, including fingerprints. Students contract directly with the approved vendors, and the Health Records Coordinator maintains confidential results.

STUDENT DENIAL/REFUSAL BY A CLINICAL AGENCY

The clinical agency reserves the right to approve or deny the student for clinical privileges. Refusal of a clinical agency to accept a student for clinical rotations will prevent a student from enrolling in or participating in any of the SUSCC Health Sciences programs. The student is solely responsible for clearing any refusals/denials reported by the clinical agency. Students who are unable to resolve any denials will be dismissed from the Health Science Program and administratively withdrawn from all enrolled Health Science courses.

STUDENT DISMISSAL FROM A CLINICAL AGENCY

The clinical agency (ies) reserve the right to dismiss a student from clinical due to unprofessional or unethical behaviors. Any time the student cannot meet the clinical requirements of the clinical agency, the student will be dismissed from the Health Science Program and administratively withdrawn from all Health Science courses when the event occurs. Any Health Science student whom a clinical agency dismisses is not eligible for admission into a SUSCC Health Science Program at any time.

STUDENT PRECEPTORSHIP REQUIREMENT

The MAT Program facilitates two student clinical preceptorship experiences:

- **MAT 239: Phlebotomy Preceptorship** - This course is designed to provide the opportunity to apply phlebotomy techniques in the physician's clinic and hospital setting. Emphasis is placed on training individuals to properly collect and handle blood specimens for laboratory testing and to interact with health care personnel, patients, and the general public.
- **MAT 230: Medical Assisting Practicum** - This course is a medical assisting capstone course. The student is expected to apply administrative, clinical, and laboratory knowledge while under the supervision of a designated preceptor. The student performs administrative,

clinical, and laboratory skills while displaying positive affective behaviors expected of a medical assistant in the medical setting. The total number of contact hours must be at least 160 hours. The course content aligns with standards and guidelines from the Medical Assisting Education Review Board (MAERB), in collaboration with CAAHEP.

Successful completion includes meeting all required clinical hours, demonstrating required competencies, adhering to professional and clinical standards, completing required documentation, and receiving a satisfactory evaluation from the assigned preceptor and/or MAT faculty. Failure to successfully complete a required preceptorship may result in remediation, reassignment, repetition of the preceptorship, or dismissal from the program in accordance with applicable MAT Program policies.

PRECEPTORSHIP PAPERWORK

Requirements for satisfactory completion of preceptorship paperwork vary with each Health Sciences course. See each course syllabus for requirements. Preceptorship paperwork is to be submitted on the determined due date. Paperwork that is submitted after the due date may be considered unsatisfactory.

PRECEPTORSHIP AND SKILLS LAB ABSENCES

The student is expected to assume responsibility for punctual and regular lab/preceptorship attendance. If the student cannot attend a lab/preceptorship session, the student must contact the assigned preceptor and instructor at least 30 minutes before the preceptorship experience begins via text message, Email, or telephone message to the faculty. If the student is to be late, the student should notify the assigned preceptor and instructor as soon as possible. Chronic tardiness is not tolerated. Tardy students will receive an unsatisfactory for the day. Course syllabi will identify the requirements for completing lab/preceptorship courses. Students must make up each lab/preceptorship absence, even with a documented excuse.

All lab/preceptorship absences count toward the student's total absence hours, even when made up. Under no circumstances shall a student miss an excess of 10% of their lab/preceptorship time during the semester. If the student misses more than 10% of their lab/preceptorship time, the student's progression in lab/preceptorship rotations and the allied health program as a whole will be prohibited. The instructor will refer the student to the Admission Progression Committee for Health Sciences. The student will submit documentation for the absences, and the committee will review and decide whether the student may remain enrolled in the program. The committee's decision is final and serves as the student's appeal. Failure to be eligible for lab/preceptorship will result in withdrawal from the course and a grade of "W".

PRECEPTORSHIP EVALUATION AND FAILURE

The Preceptorship Evaluation aims to verify that the student has met measurable objectives deemed necessary for competent medical assisting practice. The MAT Preceptorship Handbook outlines the objectives to be achieved in each preceptorship course (MAT 230 and MAT 239). Critical Behaviors are behaviors that must be met at all times when representing Southern Union State Community College within the preceptorship setting, skills laboratory, simulation center,

professional meetings, and community outreaches. Failure to meet these expectations will result in disciplinary action.

The Critical Behaviors that may result in a Preceptorship Failure are as follows:

1. Practice or behaviors outside the facility policy as stated in the college catalog or student handbook.
2. Practice outside of the student's training and scope of practice.
3. HIPAA violations (see policy)
4. Intentional or unintentional unsafe practices that result in harm or the potential harm to patients, students, or staff
5. Unprofessional behaviors
6. A pattern of unsafe behavior

Students will receive a Preceptorship Unsatisfactory for performing acts deemed inappropriate or when a student is not performing at the expected level. Unsatisfactory preceptorship performances are placed in the student's file and are carried from semester to semester. Repeated unsatisfactory performances will constitute a preceptorship failure. The student is responsible for meeting with the course coordinator/full-time faculty and setting up remediation and an action plan.

Preceptorship Failure is given for a critical behavior (as listed above) or for repeated uncorrected unsatisfactory preceptorship performance. When the student receives a preceptorship failure, the student will receive a grade of "F" for the course and be administratively withdrawn from any other MAT courses. The student will appeal to the Health Sciences Admission/Progression Committee for readmission to the MAT program. If readmitted, prior preceptorship unsatisfactory/failure will remain in the student's file and will be considered in any future preceptorship performance reviews/evaluations.

Students who receive a preceptorship failure before the withdrawal date published in the yearly college calendar will receive a course grade of "F" on their transcript for the course. The student will not be allowed to withdraw from the course, even if the date precedes the established withdrawal deadline.

SKILLS LABORATORY POLICY

Students will have two or three opportunities to demonstrate competency in psychomotor or affective skills, depending upon the assessment tool utilized to determine student competency. Failure to demonstrate competency after the second or third attempt will result in course non-progression. The student will be responsible for demonstrating competency in specified skills in the skills lab. The instructor will teach, demonstrate, and supervise the practice of the skill. The student is responsible for required readings and review of handouts, if applicable. The student should arrange additional practice of the skill if needed.

The student will attempt to check off the specified skill through one-on-one observation by an instructor. Evaluation will be based on the instructor's final assessment. The student cannot repeat a check-off attempt on the same day as a failed attempt. If unsuccessful on the first try, the

student must do the following:

- Review of skill via reading procedure and video (if applicable)
- Practice in the lab (as permitted) and outside of lab time as needed
- Demonstration to another student that has previously checked off
- Arrange a second (or third, if applicable) check-off attempt with the instructor.

SIMULATION CENTER CONFIDENTIALITY STATEMENT

In order to preserve the realism of the scenarios used in the Southern Union simulation center and to provide an equitable learning experience for each student, all persons using the simulation center will be required to sign a confidentiality agreement. Because every simulation will be recorded on a DVD, the statement also includes an agreement to be filmed and recorded. This confidentiality statement applies to the simulation and all patient information available to the students. Any student's violation of this confidentiality statement will be considered a violation of the school's code of conduct.

SIMULATION CENTER CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT AND CONSENT TO VIDEO

During the student's simulated preceptorship experience at the Southern Union Simulation Center, the student will actively participate in scenarios and observe. The objectives of the simulated experiences are to educate health science students to better assess and improve their performances in evolving healthcare situations. The simulated experiences are designed to challenge health science students' responses and judgment in a controlled environment and develop clinical reasoning. By signing the handbook verification page, the student agrees to maintain strict confidentiality regarding their and others' performance, whether seen in real-time, on video, or otherwise communicated to them. Failure to maintain confidentiality may result in unwarranted and unfair defamation of the character of the participants.

The student will discuss the scenarios during the debriefing. Still, Southern Union State Community College believes that "all that takes place in the simulation environment should stay in the simulation environment." Due to copyrights and to maintain optimal simulation experiences for the other learners following you in the center, you must maintain strict confidentiality regarding the specific scenarios and what happened during the simulation experience. Any breach of confidentiality will result in disciplinary actions. For further information, the student should reference the "Student Code of Conduct" policy within the Interactive College Catalog available on the College's website.

UNIFORM GUIDELINES

ID Badge Students must wear their official Southern Union State Community College student identification badge on the chest area of the uniform at all times during clinical assignments. Failure to wear the ID badge will result in dismissal from the clinical site for the day.

Attire Students must present a professional appearance at all times while in the clinical setting or when representing Southern Union State Community College at off-site events. All students are required to wear clean, wrinkle-free hunter green scrubs. Scrubs must be appropriately fitted and in good condition, without holes or frays. Pant hems should not be frayed or drag on the ground. Socks must be worn. Undershirts, if worn, must be solid in color. Acceptable colors for undershirts include white, navy, hunter green, black, or gray. Optional lab coats must be either hunter green or solid white. Students opting not to wear scrub pants may wear a scrub dress or skirt. However, the hem must fall no higher than the top of the knee. White socks or hosiery must be worn with scrub dresses or skirts. Casual attire, such as jeans, T-shirts, shorts, or similarly informal clothing, is not permitted without prior instructor approval for the scheduled clinical experience.

Shoes Students must wear clean, closed-toe, non-canvas or athletic shoes designated solely for clinical use. Open-heel shoes are permitted only if they include a secure heel strap. Boots are not allowed. If in doubt about footwear, students should obtain approval before the first scheduled clinical day.

Jewelry Jewelry must be minimal and professional. Acceptable items include a wedding band (rings with stones may be worn only if permitted by facility policy), a watch with a second hand, and small, plain stud earrings worn only in the earlobes. No other visible piercings or jewelry are permitted.

Perfume Perfumes, colognes, and scented body products are not permitted in the clinical environment.

Hair Hair must be clean, neatly styled, and secured off the shoulders and collar to avoid interference with patient care. Hair color must be within naturally occurring human shades, and styles should be conservative and aligned with professional norms. Decorative hair accessories such as jewelry or unnatural adornments are not permitted.

Nails Only short, clean, natural nails are allowed. Nail polish (clear or colored), artificial nails, tips, and gel applications are strictly prohibited.

Personal Students are expected to maintain high standards of personal hygiene. This includes daily bathing, regular hair washing, and the use of underarm deodorant. Undergarments, including bras and underwear, must not be visible through the uniform.

Tattoos Tattoos that could be offensive to others must be covered.

In addition to the uniform guidelines, students must comply with all policies (including uniform policies) specified by clinical agencies.

HEALTH, SAFETY, AND CLINICAL CLEARANCE

ACEMAPP: CLINICAL RECORD PLATFORM

All student health records should be uploaded by the student into ACEMAPP (acemapp.org). The student is responsible for keeping their annual (12-month) ACEMAPP subscription and all health records current. Students can access their school health records through ACEMAPP (acemapp.org). Therefore, the school will not provide copies to clinical agencies after the student graduates. Please allow up to 2 business days for documents to be reviewed and approved in ACEMAPP by the Health Sciences Records Clerk. If a clinical document is denied, a comment will be provided in the student's ACEMAPP account. Documents are not reviewed after business hours. Clinical facility orientation documents are assigned for students to complete on the ACEMAPP platform. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that their ACEMAPP account is current. Instructions on how to check your ACEMAPP account can be found at <https://vimeo.com/417734538>. Students with incomplete ACEMAPP accounts will be denied access to the clinical site(s) and may receive a clinical unsatisfactory.

MAINTAINING HEALTH RECORDS

Students enrolling in a health science program must complete all clinical health requirements before enrolling in any Health Science class. The health record must be up-to-date for the entire semester. For example, if a TB skin test expires on October 12, the student must repeat the test before they can register for the fall semester. There are no exceptions to this rule. Students who fail to complete the health records by the last day to register for the semester will be considered non-progression and must reapply for admission into the program.

RELEASE OF CLINICAL INFORMATION AND STUDENT HEALTH INFORMATION

Health Sciences students must permit Southern Union State Community College to release information regarding clinical and classroom performance to clinical agencies, including those with whom the student may apply for employment. Students must also permit required clinical documentation such as but not limited to the following: immunizations, TB skin test, CPR, drug screens, and criminal background checks to be available to the clinical agencies as requested.

REQUIRED IMMUNIZATIONS

Clinical affiliation agreements between SUSCC and our partnering clinical agencies detail the terms under which each clinical site will provide on-site student educational experiences. Provisions related to immunizations require each student to be compliant with the current clinical facility policies relevant to the clinical experiences.

The following immunizations are required for students enrolled in the MAT program:

- Hepatitis B: All students are required to receive the Hepatitis B vaccine series or have a positive Hepatitis B titer. The vaccine series is a series of three injections. The student must have the first injection prior to the first term of registration. The second injection must be received one month after the initial vaccination; the third injection must be received six

months after the first vaccination. All Hepatitis documentation must be uploaded into ACEMAPP.

- Varicella: All students are required to receive two Varicella immunizations or have documentation of a positive Varicella titer. The student must have the first injection prior to the first term of registration. The second injection must be received two months after the initial vaccination. History of illness/ childhood illness does not meet the Varicella requirement. All Varicella documentation must be uploaded into ACEMAPP.
- Influenza (Flu): All students are required to get an annual seasonal influenza vaccine. Waivers are not accepted. The deadline for the flu vaccines each year is October 1. All influenza documentation must be uploaded into ACEMAPP.
- COVID: All students are required to complete a full series of the COVID vaccination. Student waivers are not permitted. Boosters are not required at this time. All COVID vaccination documentation must be uploaded into ACEMAPP.
- Measles, Mumps, Rubella (MMR): All students are required to receive two MMR immunizations or have documentation of a positive MMR titer. All MMR documentation must be uploaded into ACEMAPP.
- TDAP: All students are required to receive one TDAP immunization. Immunizations are good for 10 years. All TDAP documentation must be uploaded into ACEMAPP.

TB SKIN TEST

A TB skin test is required annually. If a student has a positive skin test, then the student must have a chest X-ray every two years and complete the TB questionnaire annually. All TB documentation must be uploaded into ACEMAPP.

CPR CERTIFICATION / BASIC LIFE SUPPORT (BLS)

All Health Sciences Division students are required to be certified in Basic Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) through the American Heart Association at either the Healthcare Provider level or Basic Life Support level before registration each semester. Clinical agencies do not accept Red Cross certification. Certification must be maintained while enrolled in the program. CPR is current for two years (24 months) from the issue date and must remain current throughout the semester. CPR documentation is uploaded by the student into ACEMAPP.

PERSONAL MEDICAL HEALTH INSURANCE

Each student in the Health Sciences Division must have personal health (medical) insurance throughout enrollment in the program. Students must upload documentation to ACEMAPP. Students may register once their proof of Health Insurance has been approved in ACEMAPP. If uninsured, medical insurance per semester is available through a third party. Please contact the Health Records Admissions Assistant for more information.

MALPRACTICE (LIABILITY) INSURANCE

Each student must maintain current malpractice insurance throughout enrollment in any Health Sciences Division program, including semesters without a clinical component. Southern Union purchases malpractice insurance through registration in the first semester of classes and each semester thereafter. The insurance costs approximately \$10-15 per semester for coverage at the

\$1,000,000/\$3,000,000 level. Student fees include payment for malpractice insurance.

PHYSICAL EXAMINATION / HEALTH QUESTIONNAIRE

Students are required to submit upon admission to the Health Science program a health questionnaire completed by their health care provider. The completed health questionnaire is to be uploaded in ACEMAPP.

ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS

The Alabama College System endorses the Americans with Disabilities Act. In accordance with Southern Union State Community College policy, when requested, reasonable accommodations may be provided for individuals with disabilities. Reasonable accommodations are not retroactive. They begin the day the student submits the required form. Students must present reasonable accommodations each semester. Physical, cognitive, psychomotor, affective, and social abilities are required in unique combinations to provide safe and effective patient care. The applicant/student must be able to meet the essential functions with or without reasonable accommodations throughout the program of learning. Admission, progression, and graduation are contingent upon one's ability to demonstrate the essential functions delineated for the Health Sciences programs with or without reasonable accommodations. The Health Sciences programs and/or their affiliated clinical agencies may identify additional essential functions. The Health Sciences programs reserve the right to amend the essential functions as deemed necessary.

In order to be admitted and to progress in the Health Sciences program, one must possess a functional level of ability to perform the duties required of a healthcare provider. Admission or progression may be denied if a student is unable to demonstrate the essential functions with or without reasonable accommodations. The essential functions delineated are those deemed necessary for the Alabama Community College System Health Science programs. No representation regarding industrial standards is implied. Similarly, any reasonable accommodations made will be determined and applied to the respective Health Sciences program and may vary from reasonable accommodations made by healthcare employers.

The essential functions delineated on the SUSCC website (suscc.edu) are necessary for MAT program admission, progression, and graduation and for the provision of safe and effective patient care. Upon admission, an individual who discloses a disability can request reasonable accommodations. Individuals will be asked to provide documentation of the disability in order to assist with the provision of appropriate reasonable accommodations. The respective College will provide reasonable accommodations but is not required to substantially alter the requirements or nature of the program or provide accommodations that inflict an undue burden on the respective College. In order to be admitted one must be able to perform all the essential functions with or without reasonable accommodations. If an individual's health changes during the program of learning so that the essential functions cannot be met with or without reasonable accommodations, the student will be withdrawn from the Health Sciences program.

The Health Sciences faculty reserves the right at any time to require an additional medical examination at the student's expense in order to assist with the evaluation of the student's ability to

perform the essential functions. Requests for reasonable accommodations should be directed to the Southern Union State Community College Disability Services Officer. If reasonable accommodations cannot be made, the student will not be able to remain in the Health Sciences program.

ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS VERIFICATION

Upon admission to the Health Sciences program, students are required to complete the Essential Functions verification form. This form must be uploaded in ACEMAPP and updated as the student's status changes. You must respond on the verification form if you fully meet the criteria (100%) or are unable to fully meet the criteria (less than 100%). If you are unable to fully meet the criterion, an explanation and/or additional information will be required. Reasonable accommodation may be requested. The Southern Union State Community College Disability Services Coordinator will determine if the accommodations can be met. Students who give birth or experience an illness or injury which requires, but is not limited to, hospitalization, surgery, or more than one week's absence may be required to provide a physician's statement or an updated Essential Functions verification form which verifies:

- That returning to routine class, lab, and clinical activities does not pose undue risk or harm to the student or others with whom the student will come in contact.
- Compliance with the Essential Functions/Technical Standards established for the program of study.

OCCUPATIONAL RISKS

Students entering any program in the Health Sciences Division must be aware that they may be exposed to various occupational risks and certain diseases during their education and career, including but not limited to:

- Exposure to infectious disease
- Sharps injuries
- Bloodborne pathogens and other biological hazards
- Chemical exposure
- Ergonomic hazards
- Repeated latex exposure
- Increased stress

Precautions to be taken are outlined in the introductory patient care courses. Additional information may be provided by each healthcare facility. Students are required to use available protective devices and to use standard (universal) precautions.

Students, upon diagnosis of communicable disease(s) (i.e., chicken pox, measles, flu, etc.), must contact their instructor immediately. Based on current medical knowledge, the instructor will make a judgment of communicability and advise the student regarding attendance.

Students in all health care programs must comply with Public Law #102-141, Section 633 and "The Alabama Infected Health Care Worker Management Act." The law requires that the HIV or HBV-infected healthcare worker report to the State Health Officer his/her condition within 30 days of the time s/he is aware of his/her infection. The infected healthcare worker must realize that

any physician providing care to an infected healthcare worker must notify the State Health Officer of the infected status within seven days of the time they provide such care.

INJURY DURING PRECEPTORSHIP

If the student becomes injured during preceptorship experiences (needle stick, back injury, etc.), the student must:

- Notify the preceptorship preceptor immediately.
- Notify the course coordinator.
- Complete an appropriate incident report/ or variance report required by the agency.

The student will be referred to the nearest hospital's Emergency Department to be examined by a provider. The hospital will provide immediate care. The provider may advise students who incur a needle stick or any other type of direct risk exposure with a patient to begin immediate treatment for HIV. The student must start prophylactic treatment soon after exposure for the most effective results. The cost for laboratory tests and medications may be as high as \$1000.00. The student is financially responsible for any illness or injury during preceptorship rotations; therefore, Southern Union State Community College requires students to have health, hospitalization, and accident insurance. During preceptorship rotations, students should not be treated as employees of the healthcare agency or the College. Therefore, students are not entitled to and will not receive workman's compensation from the College or the health care facility if injured during preceptorship rotations.

The nature of healthcare education is such that one may be exposed to potential health and safety hazards while participating in preceptorship rotations. With that knowledge and understanding, by signing the SUSCC MAT Program Handbook acknowledgment form, the student releases Southern Union State Community College, its employees, officials, agents, and representatives from any claim of liability for injury, loss, damage, or death that may result or arise from the student's experiences in the healthcare agency. The student should further understand that if injured at a healthcare agency while participating in preceptorship activities, the healthcare agency is not responsible for providing workman's compensation benefits.

SUBSTANCE ABUSE POLICY

PHILOSOPHY

Faculty members in the Southern Union State Community College Health Science Programs believe that each student has a personal obligation to practice those health-conscious behaviors intended to foster transparent and rational decision-making and the ability to function safely and therapeutically throughout their program of studies.

PURPOSE

As health care professionals, faculty members support a policy wherein each individual providing patient care in a preceptorship setting or preparing educationally to become a health care provider adheres to high personal health standards. This includes, but is not limited to, the avoidance of mind/behavior-altering substances, including but not limited to alcohol and prescription or illicit drug use. Therefore, the faculty has adopted the following policy, which is now in effect.

STUDENT DRUG SCREEN GUIDELINES

As stipulated by the appropriate discipline-specific licensure agency, students must perform in the clinical setting in such a manner that will promote safe patient care. In addition, clinical agencies are obligated to ensure that patients are protected to the extent reasonably possible from possible harm due to the completion of clinical rotations. This includes drug screening before the first clinical experience, random drug screening at intervals, and drug screening should a student exhibit behaviors indicative of substance abuse.

PRE-CLINICAL/RANDOM SCREENING

All students will receive the drug screening guidelines before clinical rotation in the Health Science Programs. Drug screening will be scheduled and conducted by a designated laboratory determined by the school. The fee for testing is to be paid by the student. Any student failing to report for random screening at the specified time must complete testing with the designated laboratory within 48 hours, or they will be dismissed from the program. Failure to complete drug screening as required will prohibit the student from completing the required health science courses. Positive drug screens are confirmed by the Medical Review Officer (MRO).

READMISSION TO THE PROGRAM

A student unable to complete the required courses due to a positive drug screen may apply for readmission to the Health Science Program. To be considered for readmission following a positive drug screen, the student must:

- Submit a letter from a treatment agency verifying the completion of an approved substance abuse program that meets licensure guidelines for the respective discipline.
- Submit to an unannounced drug screen at the student's expense before readmission. A positive screen will result in ineligibility for readmission.
- Submit to an unannounced drug screen at the student's expense prior to readmission and random drug screen throughout the program. Any additional positive drug screen will result in ineligibility for readmission.

SUBSTANCE ABUSE VERIFICATION PROCESS

For the protection of patients, faculty, staff, and students, the MAT Program has the right to require a student to submit to testing for substance abuse at the student's expense when the program has reasonable cause to believe that a student is abusing controlled substances. Reasonable cause is defined as, but not limited to, the following:

- Observable phenomena, such as direct observation of drug use or the physical symptoms or manifestations of being under the influence of a drug, such as, but not limited to, slurred speech, noticeable change in grooming habits, impaired physical coordination, inappropriate comments or behaviors, or papillary changes;
- Abnormal conduct or erratic behavior, absenteeism, tardiness, or deterioration in performance.
- A report of drug use.
- Evidence of tampering with a drug test.
- Information that the individual has caused or contributed to the harm of self, visitors, faculty, other staff, or patient as a result of being under the influence of drugs
- Evidence of involvement in drug use, possession, sale, solicitation, or transfer.

If a faculty member observes such behavior, and if another faculty member or clinical agency staff member observes or validates it, the faculty member must immediately dismiss the student from the educational or patient setting and contact the MAT Program Director to review the situation. The MAT Program Director will then determine if "reasonable cause" exists to test the student for substance abuse.

If another student or any other individual other than an instructor observes abnormal conduct or erratic behavior of a health science student, the observation must be reported immediately (or as soon as possible) to the appropriate instructor. Once the department chair is notified, the appropriate measures will be taken. If the decision is made to test the student, the Division Chair, Program Director, or designee will direct the faculty member to arrange for testing to be performed immediately within the clinical facility, if possible. The student will be requested to sign an informed consent to be tested before collecting the specimen. The student's failure to consent to the substance abuse test shall result in immediate termination from the Health Science Program.

EXPOSURE CONTROL PLAN

Southern Union State Community College is committed to providing students and faculty with a safe and healthy learning environment. To pursue this goal, the following exposure control plan (ECP) is provided to eliminate or minimize exposure to bloodborne pathogens. The ECP is a crucial document that helps our organization implement and comply with the standard, protecting our students and faculty. This ECP includes:

- Implementation of various methods of exposure control, including:
 - Universal precautions
 - Engineering and safe practice controls
 - Personal protective equipment
 - Housekeeping
- Post-exposure evaluation and follow-up
- Recordkeeping
- Procedures for evaluating circumstances surrounding exposure incidents

PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

The MAT Program Director and faculty implement the ECP. The MAT Program Director will maintain, review, and update the ECP at least annually and whenever necessary to include new or modified tasks and procedures. Those students/faculty determined to have occupational exposure to blood or other potentially infectious materials (OPIM) must comply with the policies and practices outlined in this ECP.

The MAT Program Director/ MAT faculty will be responsible for the following:

- Providing and maintaining all necessary personal protective equipment (PPE), engineering controls, labels, and red bags.
- Providing education regarding bloodborne pathogens, documentation of training, and making the written ECP available to students and faculty.
- Ensuring that all medical actions required are performed and that appropriate records are maintained.

METHODS OF IMPLEMENTATION AND CONTROL

UNIVERSAL PRECAUTIONS

All students and faculty will utilize universal precautions. Safety procedures and universal precautions are covered as they relate to the content area and are reinforced throughout the program. The student is responsible for seeking guidance from an appropriate resource if they have any doubts, questions, or concerns regarding the correct procedure.

EXPOSURE CONTROL PLAN

Students will receive an explanation of the ECP when enrolled in a phlebotomy course at SUSCC (MAT 125 or MAT 215). Any student or faculty can review this plan in the MAT laboratory on the Valley campus (room 109) at any time or by contacting the MAT Program Director. The MAT Program Director can provide a copy of the ECP upon request. The MAT Program Director is

responsible for reviewing and updating the ECP annually or more frequently, if necessary, to reflect any new or modified tasks and procedures that affect exposure.

ENGINEERING CONTROLS AND SAFE PRACTICES

Engineering controls and safe practice controls will be used to prevent or minimize exposure to bloodborne pathogens.

- The MAT Program Director inspects, maintains, or replaces Sharps disposal containers every semester or whenever necessary to prevent overfilling.
- The MAT Program Director provides safety needles/syringes for student use.
- Spill kits will be available in all MAT skills laboratories.
- An eyewash station is available in the MAT phlebotomy laboratory.
- Sinks with hot and cold water are operational in all MAT skills laboratories.
- Non-porous tables are utilized in the MAT phlebotomy laboratory.
- CaviCide surface disinfectant is available in all MAT skills laboratories.

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

The MAT Program provides personal protective equipment (PPE) to students and faculty at no cost. MAT faculty provide training on using appropriate PPE for specific tasks or procedures. The types of PPE available to students and faculty are as follows:

- Disposable Gloves
- Disposable Goggles
- Disposable Gowns

All students and faculty using PPE must observe the following precautions:

- Wash hands immediately or as soon as feasible after removing gloves or other PPE.
- Remove PPE after it becomes contaminated and before leaving the work area.
- Used PPE may be disposed of in the garbage.
- Wear appropriate gloves when it is reasonably anticipated that there may be hand contact with blood or other potentially infectious materials (OPIM) and when handling or touching contaminated items or surfaces.
- Replace gloves if torn, punctured, contaminated, or if their ability to function as a barrier is compromised.
- Never wash or decontaminate disposable gloves for reuse.
- Wear appropriate face and eye protection when splashes, sprays, spatters, or droplets of blood or OPIM pose a hazard to the eye, nose, or mouth.
- Remove immediately or as soon as feasible any garment contaminated by blood or OPIM in such a way as to avoid contact with the outer surface.

HOUSEKEEPING

Place regulated waste in closable containers constructed to contain all contents and prevent leakage, appropriately labeled or color-coded (see the following section "Labels"), and close them before removal to prevent spillage or protrusion of contents during handling.

Secure sealed sharps disposal containers in the storage room (Boiler Room of the Technical Building) for on-call pickup by the contracted waste service. Please contact the Director of Health

Sciences Programs at ext. 5514 to arrange a pickup on the Valley campus. Discard contaminated sharps immediately, or as soon as possible, in closable, puncture-resistant containers that are leakproof on the sides and bottom and appropriately labeled or color-coded. Sharps disposal containers are available in all MAT skills laboratories. Only pick up broken glassware that may be contaminated using mechanical means, such as a brush and dustpan.

LABELS

MAT Program Director/MAT faculty is responsible for ensuring that warning labels are affixed or red bags are used as required if regulated waste or contaminated equipment is brought into the facility. Students/faculty are to notify the MAT Program Director if they discover regulated waste containers, refrigerators containing blood or OPIM, contaminated equipment, etc., without proper labels.

IF AN EXPOSURE OCCURS

What should I do if I am exposed to blood or body fluids?

Immediately:

- Wash needle sticks and cuts with soap and water
- Flush splashes to the nose, mouth, or skin with water
- Irrigate eyes with clean water, saline, or sterile irrigant

POST-EXPOSURE EVALUATION AND FOLLOW-UP

Following initial first aid (clean the wound, flush eyes or other mucous membranes, etc.), the student should perform the following activities after a potential exposure:

- If the exposure occurs on campus, notify your MAT course instructor immediately. The MAT Program Director will refer the student for a confidential medical evaluation and follow-up at EAMC-Lanier's Emergency Department.
- If the exposure occurs during clinical, notify your course coordinator or the MAT Program Director immediately. The course coordinator or MAT Program Director will refer the student for a confidential medical evaluation and follow-up at the closest emergency department.
- The MAT Program Director will work with the exposed student to:
 - Document the routes of exposure and how the exposure occurred.
 - Identify and document the source individual.
 - After obtaining consent, collect the exposed student's or faculty member's blood as soon as feasible after the exposure incident and test the blood for HBV and HIV serological status.

ADMINISTRATION OF POST-EXPOSURE EVALUATION AND FOLLOW-UP

The MAT Program Director will ensure that the student receives a referral to a health care professional after an exposure incident.

PROCEDURES FOR EVALUATING THE EXPOSURE INCIDENT

MAT Program Director will review the circumstances of all exposure incidents to determine:

- Engineering controls in use at the time

- Safe practices followed
- A description of the device being used (including type and brand)
- Protective equipment or clothing that was used at the time of the exposure incident (gloves, eye shields, etc.)
- Location of the incident
- The procedure being performed when the incident occurred

If revisions to this ECP are necessary, the MAT Program Director will ensure appropriate changes are made.

STUDENT TRAINING

All MAT program students may potentially be exposed to bloodborne pathogens. Therefore, all MAT program students will receive training on bloodborne pathogens conducted by the MAT program director/MAT course faculty at the beginning of the MAT 125 and MAT 215 courses. In addition, the MAT 125 and 215 courses cover, at a minimum, the following elements:

- An explanation of our ECP
- An explanation of methods to recognize tasks and other activities that may involve exposure to blood and OPIM, including what constitutes an exposure incident
- An explanation of the use and limitations of engineering controls, safe practices, and PPE
- An explanation of the types, uses, locations, removal, handling, and disposal of PPE.
- An explanation of the basis for PPE selection
- Information on the appropriate actions to take and persons to contact in an emergency involving blood or OPIM
- An explanation of the procedure to follow if an exposure incident occurs, including the method of reporting the incident and the medical follow-up
- An explanation of the signs, labels, and color coding
- An opportunity for interactive questions and answers with the person conducting the training session

SHARPS INJURY LOG

The MAT Program Director will maintain a Sharps Injury Log that documents all percutaneous injuries from contaminated sharps within the MAT skills laboratories.

All incidents must include at least the following:

- Date of the injury
- Type and brand of the device involved (syringe, suture needle)
- Department or work area where the incident occurred
- Explanation of how the incident occurred

This log is reviewed as part of the annual program evaluation and maintained for at least five years following the end of the calendar year covered. If anyone requests a copy of the Sharps Injury Log, the MAT Program Director must remove protected health information from the report before its release.

MAT PROGRAM EDUCATION CONTINUITY PLAN

In the event of unanticipated interruptions, which may include but are not limited to the unexpected departure of key personnel, natural disaster, public health crisis, fire, flood, power failure, failure of information technology services, or other events that may lead to inaccessibility of educational services, the Medical Assistant Technology (MAT) program at Southern Union State Community College will utilize the following preparedness plan to assure continuity of education services. Continuity of education is the primary focus for each adaptation to the plan.

Unexpected departures of key personnel that cannot be immediately replaced will warrant schedule changes for students and current faculty. In the event of an instructor's departure, the Program Director, Practicum Coordinator, or other MAT program instructors will substitute until a qualified replacement is onboarded and appropriately trained.

In the event of an unexpected departure of the Program Director or Practicum Coordinator:

- To ensure continued curriculum delivery, the Dean of Health Sciences will have continuous access to all curriculum content and resources via the College's LMS.
- If access to the LMS is unavailable, health sciences instructors will have alternate electronic access to all course resources. Hard copies of the program textbooks are available for student use within Southern Union State Community College's Learning Resource Center (LRC).
- In the event of an extended internet outage, course content in the LMS can be downloaded and viewed offline as an e-pub file by both students and instructors.
- The Dean of Health Sciences and all MAT program instructors will maintain the most recent electronic and hard copies of the MAT Program Handbook, course schedule, course syllabi, and comprehensive curriculum guide at the start of every cohort.
- All MAT program instructors and the Dean of Health Sciences will maintain copies of clinical schedules and contacts before students start their practicums to ensure awareness and continuity of clinical plans.
- Upon completing and submitting each Annual Report Form (ARF), the Program Director will share electronic copies of the ARF and any raw data with the Dean of Health Sciences to ensure programmatic continuity.
- The Director of Health Sciences Programs will have copies of all signed Affiliation contracts for the MAT program.

The MAT Program will use the following guidelines for any event that leads to the inability to access educational services on campus:

- All program status changes will be communicated through MAT Program Handbook addendums, course syllabi updates, email notifications, and LMS announcements. Changes to the MAT Program will be communicated within 48 hours of the significant event. All communication and correspondence should be maintained in a file. Communication should be with the institution, faculty, students, and clinical affiliates when necessary or when changes occur.
- Southern Union State Community College faculty or staff will provide students with updated information on accessing Campus Security and Student Success Services.

- Virtual instruction methods will take place synchronously to deliver the theory portion of the core curriculum. Skills will be scheduled when in-person instruction can resume. If other options are available, such as using another facility with sufficient resources to demonstrate and evaluate skills, this method will be utilized to provide continuity of the educational experience. Skills will continue to be documented on paper with signatures.
- The Program Director will monitor virtual instruction methods for effectiveness by evaluating student progress and providing additional resources to assist students with adapting to this modality.
- The Program Director or MAT program instructors will hold virtual instruction via Canvas Conference or Zoom within classrooms, labs, or offices. The College will continue to utilize the Canvas LMS for assignments, discussions, and tests. The MAT program will use an online proctoring program for all module tests and final exams. The College will support the technology required, including but not limited to Wi-Fi hotspots and laptop loaner programs through the LRC.
- Health Sciences program information sessions will remain virtual until the Dean of Health Sciences determines that the in-person modality is appropriate.
- In the event of a delayed clinical assignment, the Practicum Coordinator will work with each clinical site to determine current availability and schedule changes that may be necessary. If a clinical site can no longer accommodate a student, the Practicum Coordinator will promptly attempt to identify an alternative clinical location. The MAT Program Director will not alter the student requirements for MAT program graduation.
- If a student's graduation is delayed due to an unexpected event, the Program Director will provide each student with an action plan to follow to complete the requirements for graduation. The student and the MAT Program Director will sign the action plan, and the MAT Program Director will maintain all documents.
- The MAT Program Director will provide any information that may help document how outcomes were affected by the interruption.
- The MAT Program Director will document any overlap of clinical slots due to unforeseen circumstances.
- The MAT Program Director will notify the Program's Advisory Committee of any change. If necessary, the MAT Program Director will plan an emergency meeting with the MAT Program Advisory Committee to assist with emergency plans.
- The MAT Program Director will notify MAERB as appropriate, and the MAT Program Director will maintain all records of action plans and courses of strategy for the emergency duration.

GENERAL COLLEGE POLICIES AND STUDENT RESOURCES

COLLEGE ACTIVITIES

Students are encouraged to participate in College-wide activities that broaden their academic experience. Activities vary from campus to campus and appeal to a variety of interests. Activities are described in the *College Catalog*, coordinated through the Student Services Office on the Wadley Campus, and posted on bulletin boards or announced in class.

College-sponsored clubs and organizations provide opportunities to share similar interests and work toward common goals. Please see the College catalog for a list of approved organizations. All students are encouraged to participate.

FUNDRAISING

The Dean of Health Sciences and the Dean of Students must approve all fundraising activities *in advance*. Fundraising is allowed only by organizations/clubs that the College officially recognizes. The senior officer of the organization should gain approval from the Program Director and then submit a written request (forms are available from the Health Sciences Division) to the Dean of Health Sciences. Upon approval by the Dean of Health Sciences, the request will be forwarded to the Dean of Students. Following approval from the Dean of Students and the College President, fundraising activities may proceed.

SMOKE-FREE AND TOBACCO-FREE POLICY

The use of all tobacco products on property owned, leased, rented, in possession of, or in any way used by Southern Union State Community College is expressly prohibited. "Tobacco Products" is defined as cigarettes, cigars, pipes, all forms of smokeless tobacco, clove cigarettes, and any other smoking devices that use tobacco (such as hookahs) or simulate the use of tobacco (such as electronic cigarettes). Further, this policy prohibits advertising, sale, or free sampling of tobacco products on Southern Union properties. This prohibition includes but is not limited to all areas indoors and outdoors, buildings, and parking lots owned, leased, rented, or otherwise used by Southern Union. The use of tobacco products is prohibited in all vehicles - private or public vehicles - located on Southern Union properties. This policy applies to all persons who enter the areas described above, including but not limited to students, faculty, staff, contractors and subcontractors, spectators, and visitors. All events hosted by Southern Union shall be smoke- and tobacco-free.

VISITOR POLICY

Southern Union State Community College welcomes visitors. Visitors are expected to abide by the regulations of the college. Students are held responsible for the conduct of their guests. Children must be under the supervision of their parents and are not to attend classes. Visitors' parking permits are available from campus police on Wadley and Opelika Campuses and the Administrative Office on the Valley campus.

INSTITUTION EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS PLAN

If an unanticipated event impacts instruction, the Southern Union State Community College administration will support each Division Chair and Program Director in developing an appropriate plan for all impacted areas of study. These plans will consider all modalities of instruction, including but not limited to converting lecture-based content to an online format, following all state and federal health/safety regulations to continue offering in-person skill instruction and assessment, and teaching in-person instruction in a comparable space with the necessary equipment. Final plans will require approval by the Dean of Health Sciences. If a course modality alteration is needed, Southern Union State Community College faculty or staff will reach out to all impacted students to ensure continuity of educational services.

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA)

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) prohibits discrimination against any qualified person, regardless of disability. The College strives to create a welcoming environment and will work in good faith to meet the needs of all populations. Students with a documented disability are eligible to receive services for educational accommodations on all campuses. Students must meet with the ADA Coordinator on the campus where they attend classes and submit supporting documentation from their medical provider so the ADA Coordinator can determine eligibility for accommodations. In most cases, a high school IEP or 504 Plan will not be sufficient to document a learning disability or attention deficit disorder. Please be advised that accommodations provided during high school may not be considered reasonable accommodations at the post-secondary level. Also, depending on the disability, the medical documentation age limits range from one to three years.

Students who have documented disabilities and need special accommodations should contact:

- Alisha Miles on the Opelika campus at (334) 745-6437 extension 5369
- Tiffanie Character on the Wadley campus at (256) 395-2211 extension 5154
- Robin Brown on the Valley campus at (334) 756-4151 extension 5204

For more information on services to our students with disabilities, please visit the SUSCC website at <https://www.suscc.edu/students/accessibility-services>.

HOSA: FUTURE HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

The MAT Program supports student participation in Southern Union State Community College's HOSA: Future Health Professionals chapter as an opportunity to develop leadership skills, strengthen professional development, and engage with other students pursuing health-related careers. For more information about chapter membership, meetings, activities, and competitive events, contact the HOSA at SUSCC chapter advisor, Dr. Melanie Caldwell, at mcaldwell@suscc.edu.

STUDENT SIGNATURE FORM

I have read the policies outlined in the Southern Union State Community College Medical Assistant Technology (MAT) Program Student Handbook. My signature below indicates that I have read, understand, and agree to abide by each policy outlined in the handbook.

In addition, the student's signature below documents that the student has been informed of and understands the consequences of not following each policy required to participate in the MAT Program at Southern Union State Community College.

An electronic or typed signature within MAT program-specific courses may be accepted in place of this Student Signature Form.

Signature _____

Printed Name _____

A Number _____

Date _____

STATEMENT OF DISCLAIMER

The College reserves the right to change cost, curriculum, course content, calendar, or any other items contained herein as changing circumstances dictate. All such changes are effective at such times as the proper authorities determine and may apply to prospective students and those already enrolled at the College.

All formats, guidelines, and evaluation criteria published in this handbook are subject to modification at the discretion of health science faculty to meet the specific requirements of the changing professional objectives of varying health sciences courses. Such changes will be published in the respective course syllabi and posted in the LMS for student review.