Veterinary Assisting Student Handbook
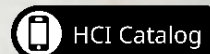
2025 – 2026

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HCI Catalog

HCI COLLEGE CAMPUS LOCATIONS

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West Palm Beach, Florida 33409

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(561) 471-4010 Fax

Registration, Admissions & Financial Aid:
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Suites 101 and 102

West Palm Beach, Florida 33409
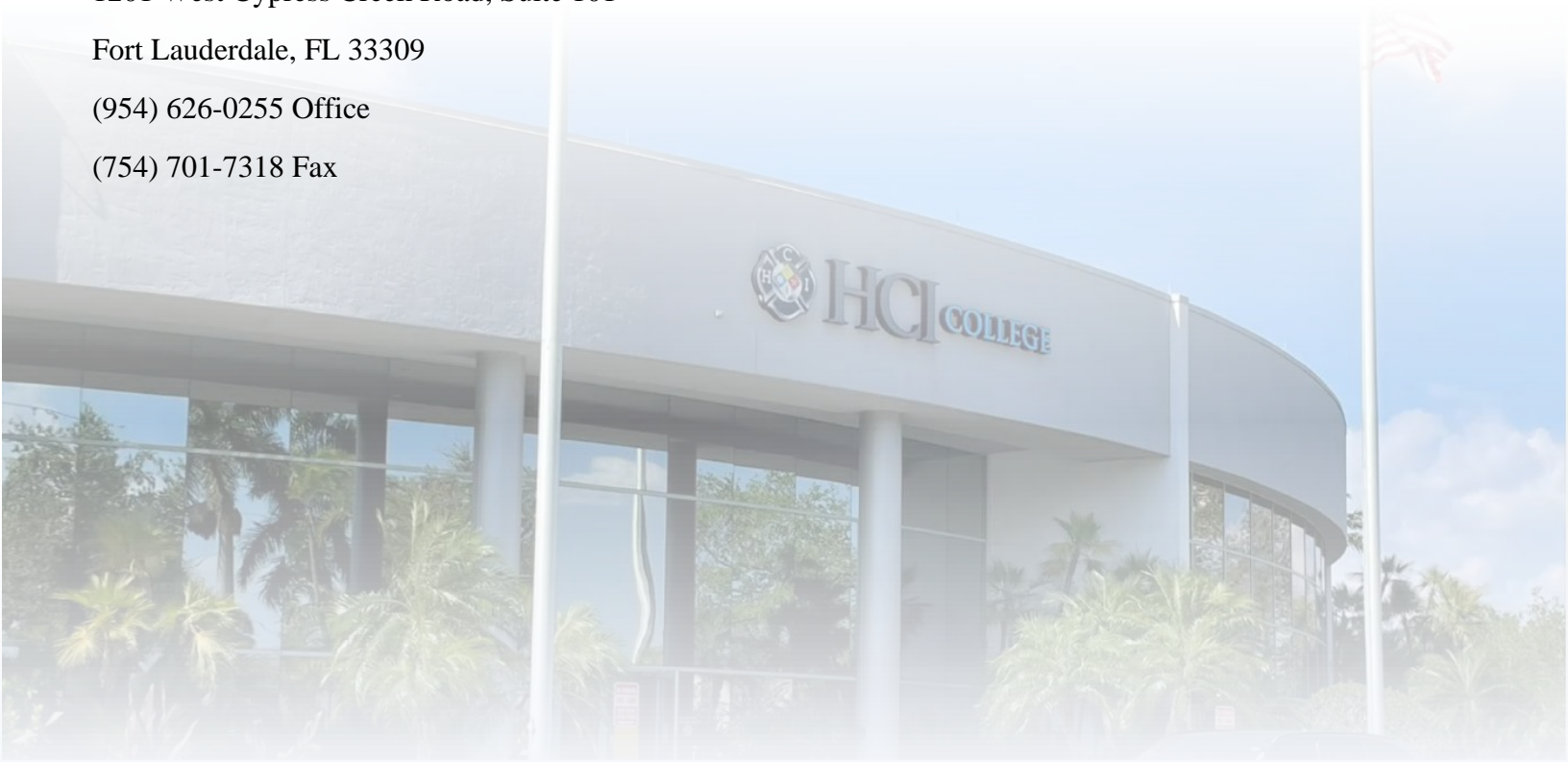
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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to HCI College Veterinary Assisting Program!

The faculty and staff at HCI College wish you much success through pursuing your goal to become a valued member of the veterinary profession. This is a very satisfying and stimulating career for all animal lovers. The Veterinary Assisting Handbook provides some emphasis on important information (in no particular order) in addition to the HCI College Student Catalog, HCI College website, and the online platform for students in the HCI College Veterinary Assisting program to review and follow.

Students are responsible for becoming familiar with all the information contained in the HCI College Student Catalog, Veterinary Assisting Student Handbook, all syllabi, and rules and expectations. **The student should retain and refer to these documents throughout the duration of the program.** Students will receive copies of revised policies and procedures and/or revised editions, as applicable.

If you have questions about the information contained in the HCI College Student Catalog or the handbook please talk with a faculty member, the Veterinary Assisting Program Director, or the Dean of Academic Affairs.

Best Wishes,

The HCI College Veterinary Assisting Department

HISTORY AND PHILOSOPHY

Health Career Institute (now HCI College) was founded in 1993. Initially, the Institute conducted American Heart Association (AHA) courses on a custom basis for physicians, nurses, and EMS providers. In 2013, the Associate of Science in Nursing degree program was introduced.

In 2016, the U.S. Department of Education granted HCI the ability to award qualifying student Federal Student Aid. In 2017, HCI added a branch campus in Lauderdale Lakes. In 2019, HCI moved its Lauderdale Lakes branch to a newly remodeled facility in Fort Lauderdale. At the same time, due to the commitment to providing quality higher education to the communities we serve, Health Career Institute underwent a name change. Health Career Institute became known as it is today, HCI College.

HCI College is a private postsecondary educational college accredited by the Accrediting Commission of Career Schools and Colleges (ACCSC). HCI College's mission is to provide educational training that prepares students to enter the workforce. The College offers general education and professional programs at the Diploma and Associate of Science Degree (A.S.) levels in healthcare fields. These programs are designed to instill knowledge and skills under the current standards of professional practice and foster the values of higher education and social responsibility.

In 2022 HCI College introduced the Veterinary Assisting (VA) Diploma program. The Veterinary Assisting program is designed to prepare students for entry-level employment as an assistant to a veterinarian or Veterinary Technician. HCI College's Veterinary Assisting program covers the essential skills needed to be part of this fast-growing industry.

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of HCI College is to provide education and training to students for a career in a variety of areas within the healthcare and technical fields, and to prepare them for employment in their chosen field that serves the community.

GOALS

At HCI College, our aim is to provide our students with an education whereupon graduation, they are equipped to confidently enter the work force, and to successfully engage and compete with their peers and colleagues.

Our dedicated faculty and staff continually seek to improve our environment, skills, and professionalism to ensure that our mission is accomplished. By proactively pursuing our vision we will be able to accomplish our goals.

ACCREDITATION, CERTIFICATIONS, LICENSES, & MEMBERSHIPS

Accredited by:

The Accrediting Commission of Career Schools and Colleges (ACCSC)

2101 Wilson Boulevard, Suite 302

Arlington, VA 22201

(703) 247-4212

#MO72133 West Palm Beach (WPB) (Main Campus) & #BR072560 Fort Lauderdale (FTL) (Branch of WPB)

Licensed by:

Commission for Independent Education (CIE) Florida Department of Education (FLDOE)

325 West Gaines Street, Suite 1414 Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0400

(850) 245-3200, (888) 224-6684

#2077 West Palm Beach (Main Campus) & #5625 Fort Lauderdale (Branch of WPB)

VETERINARY ASSISTING PROGRAMMATIC OVERVIEW

Conceptual Framework

Program Description

The diploma program in Veterinary Assisting is designed to prepare students for entry-level employment as an assistant to a veterinarian or veterinary technician. The program will provide students with a foundation of knowledge in ethics and law, animal anatomy and physiology, medical terminology, and animal care activities. Through hands-on learning, students will learn to keep medical and imaging records, offer client education, assist with nursing duties, prepare for surgeries, and assist in a routine exam. This program includes a clinical externship experience. Upon successful completion of the program a diploma is granted.

Program Philosophy

HCI College believes that the Veterinary Assistant program must be competency based to include formal work skills, hands-on laboratory and clinical experiences, and continuous evaluation of a student's progress is necessary to measure the mastery of instruction to achieve the stated objectives of the program. HCI College also believes that Veterinary Assisting is a continuous learning process which must continue after completion of the program.

Organizational Framework

As evidenced in the program's philosophy, the program curriculum emphasizes understanding and mastery of the skills needed to be successful in the field.

The program is organized according to learning domains. Students will obtain the knowledge and develop intellectual skills (cognitive); students will develop the capacity to care for the patient (affective); and students will perform the skills required as a Veterinary Assistant (psychomotor).

Veterinary Assisting Curriculum

The Veterinary Assisting program runs for approximately 10 months with one course per month, including externship at the end of the program. The courses will consist of lectures in the classroom and online, along with in class lab facilitating a "hands-on" experience. *Please refer to the HCI College Student Catalog for more detailed information.*

Veterinary Assisting Program Curriculum Changes

As the Veterinary Assisting curriculum must reflect the changing nature of the veterinary field, some restructuring of the curriculum will occur periodically. Due to this potential restructuring, students who withdraw or are dismissed from one class due to academic failure and who return to complete the program with another class are

required to meet the graduation requirements of the current curriculum and abide by current programmatic policies and procedures.

Programmatic Requirements

The curriculum is designed in a manner that each Veterinary Assisting course is either a co-requisite (can be taken before or after each other) or a prerequisite for the subsequent program course offered. To advance to the next course, students must achieve a grade of "C" with a minimum 70% in each didactic course.

All Veterinary Assisting students are to complete and pass didactic and lab components of all classes to continue in the Veterinary Assisting Program. A student is allowed two (2) attempts in any class. Failure of both attempts will dismiss a student from the program.

Program Demands

At this point, it is appropriate to emphasize the significance of effort required to succeed in the Veterinary Assisting program. One cannot overestimate the amount of time and energy that is required of the Veterinary Assisting student. Each course requires a decent amount of time outside of the classroom for study time, homework, projects, and assignments.

Additionally, due to predictable and occasionally unpredictable shifts in externship requirements from HCI College and externship sites, reliable arrangements for meeting home and outside employment obligations must be established and maintained throughout the period of the program, especially with externship, to support the students' success in the Veterinary Assisting Program.

HCI College and the Veterinary Assisting Program are likewise committed to supporting each individual Veterinary Assistant student's success by offering a quality education in an array of practical tools that can assist students in acquiring the values, knowledge, and skills that are necessary for practice. It is the student's responsibility to arrange their schedule to allow for compliance in online and in class course attendance, and externship.

Importance of Medical Terminology

The NAVTA AVA Essential Skills for Veterinary Assistants do not include specific requirements for medical terminology courses. However, we have included the Medical Terminology course in the program because we believe this course provides the basis for all the courses in this profession. We need to communicate with a clear understanding about anatomy and physiology, disease diagnostics, treatments, and general information in veterinary practice with co-workers and with pet owners. This course provides the basics of terminology that is a part of every course in this program. Use your study time to review the Key Terms at the beginning of every chapter of the textbook. Also, participate in the Quizlet exercises online with every course. Consider medical terminology a lifelong learning process that you add to every day.

ACT Videos

Some portions of the course may include scenarios and videos provided by Animal Care Technologies. These items will be assigned as appropriate and specific to each subject area or topic. The videos may require more than just watching one time. It is suggested that the student fully watch the video once, then watch it for a second time taking notes or jotting down questions for the next onsite session. Student should also create a vocabulary list for terms introduced in each video.

Class Materials

In order to complete some assignments and to participate in the online portion of the course, a student must have Internet access. Students should receive their laptops within the first week of the class. Students may use the computers in the library until they receive their laptops. The student must use the college email account for all communications with the faculty or other campus personnel.

Class Project

Each module may have a course project which will be described in the syllabus.

EXTERNSHIP

Scheduling of Externship Sites

The scheduling of students' externships is a complex process involving the needs/requirements of the externship sites, utilization by competing academic programs and coordination of all cohorts on site and readily available for placement. The Veterinary Assisting Program will continually strive to provide students with advance notice of a site change. However, due to external factors students should be prepared to accommodate changes in their externship affiliation assignments, including days of the week, and times of day. No guarantees are made for the availability of specifics days, times, or externship site locations. We will do our best to meet the needs of both the student and externship site.

Externship Site Expectations

All students are required to complete 180 externship hours. The number of hours completed each week will vary from student to student and will be based on the availability of the externship site but is not to exceed 40 hours per week.

Affiliated sites are expected to allow students to utilize their externship and administrative skills while on site. However, if a site feels you are not ready for the next step they may not be as willing to allow you to proceed. Communication between the student, site, and Program Director is expected to ensure things run as expected from all parties. If there are any issues while on the site (such as inhibiting students from doing any patient interaction or skills without explanation, unethical or illegal practices, disputes with staff, etc.), the student is expected to notify the Program Director for investigation and assistance in the matter at question.

Supervision of Veterinary Assisting Students During Externship

Veterinary Assisting students can have duties delegated and supervised by the office physician, externship supervisor, or lead veterinary assistant/technician while performing externship duties such as but not limited to blood draws, medication administration or any other invasive procedures. All externship practicum forms are to be signed by the externship supervisor or physician or nurse practitioner that oversees the student's externship experience.

Selection of Externship Sites

Externship sites are carefully selected by the Veterinary Assisting Program in accordance with curriculum requirements, quality of the care environment (and appropriate licensure/accreditation of the agency), appropriateness of accommodating the externship and administrative expectations of the veterinary assistant, and adequacy of available openings for veterinary assistant students.

Student Assignment to Externship Sites

The Program Director and Career Services will work with affiliated externship sites to accommodate all our students and their externship needs. We will do our best to accommodate some requests as seen fit. Do note there will be no guarantees on specialty, location, or hours. However, the best interest of all students is priority. We will try to match students in a fitting environment for them.

Expectations of Students on Externship Sites

Because of the importance of externship education and completion of required hours, students are expected to be present for all scheduled days and times at their site. Externship absences must be excused and requires the office manager of externship site and program director to be notified as soon as possible. Missed externship site hours are the responsibility of the student and must be made up as the scheduling allows. Tardiness to the externship sites will not be tolerated and attendance is the same standard as the classroom.

Externship absences must be excused and requires the office manager of externship site and program director to be notified as soon as possible. Missed externship site hours are the responsibility of the student and must be made up as the scheduling allows. Tardiness to the externship sites will not be tolerated and attendance is the same standard as the classroom.

Students must pass all expected externship and administrative skills while on externship. Students will be evaluated weekly by the site supervisor and then to be submitted to the Veterinary Assisting Program Director. Hours will be monitored daily and weekly to ensure you are meeting programmatic completion expectations.

Externship is to be treated like an extended job interview. The sites will be observing your interactions with staff, patients, other medical personnel, and your peers. The students' externship competencies will also be observed for efficiency, improvements and in following directions. Many sites look to hire externs as you are a perfect candidate knowing their expectations. Although there is NO GUARENTEE a hire will occur, always treat it as it is, as externship sites can be placed on your resume and be used as a reference.

Confidentiality Agreement

A high, responsible standard of conduct and professionalism is expected from each student. Students are personally accountable for the way in which patient information and other confidential information in externship facilities is utilized. Confidential information is never to be discussed with anyone other than those directly involved in the care of the patient or in the legitimate use of other confidential agency information. Those having access to patient, salary, or associate information should never browse such information out of "curiosity." It is to be used and accessed only for legitimate, externship/learning purposes.

A breach in confidentiality which involves discussing and/or releasing confidential patient or facility information, or obtaining unauthorized system access, will lead to disciplinary action from HCI College.

Each student must seriously evaluate his/her daily use of confidential patient or facility information to assure its proper use. When in doubt, always discuss the matter with your immediate supervisor for clarification or direction.

DRESS CODE

Proper professional dress and appearance are required. Approved Veterinary Assisting attire and College ID badges must be worn for ALL Veterinary Assisting class, skills laboratory, externship experiences, and any time they are on campus, or at a college sponsored function representing HCI.

Required Uniforms

The following rules pertain to scrub uniforms:

- Clean, well-maintained, and pressed
- Appropriately fitted (not too-tight or too-loose); fit must be conservative so as not to be revealing in nature.
- Cannot be altered in appearance other than approved HCI College embroidered logo.
- Cannot be worn outside of HCI College Veterinary Assisting related activities or events.
- An optional white, long, or short-sleeved t-shirt may be worn underneath the scrub top. No sportswear or jackets with hoodies are allowed.
- Any additional clothing, (i.e. a sweater) must be in solid colors with no writing, words, or offensive pictures. Long or short-sleeved shirts worn **under** scrub tops. No pullover sweaters. Scrub top must be visible.
- Students must also follow the externship facility's dress code during externship assignment, in addition to the HCI College policies.
- Uniforms that appear worn, dingy, stained or torn must be replaced at the student's expense.
- Undergarments must be worn and not be readily visible/extending beyond the scrub top apart from a small area at the neck of the garment.
- If scrub pants are too long, they must be altered so that the hem falls at shoe level but does not touch the floor (no folding or cuffs are permitted).

  Must always wear HCI College Veterinary Assisting Program badge and/or facility-specific badge; badge is worn over the chest pocket

Shoes

The following rules pertain to shoes worn with uniforms:

- White or black athletic-type shoe (no open toes, no sling-backs, no clogs, no Crocs).
- Comfortable but snugly fit (preferably with ties).
- Full-coverage and closed-toe.
- Clean (including ties); well-maintained/in good repair.
- Socks must be clean, white or black, and cover the entire foot and ankle area.

Overall Appearance

To be followed in Lecture, Lab, Externship and anytime on campus or at a college sponsored function representing HCI College.

1. Good hygiene and grooming; free of body odor and perfumes/colognes; overall body appearance must be commensurate with a professional presentation.
2. Trimmed hair, beard, moustache, sideburns (some externship affiliates may not allow facial hair).
3. **No visible tattoos:** tattoos that may be visible must be covered.
4. **Body piercing:** One small stud permitted per ear lobe (no larger than ¼"); no other visible piercings are allowed **(no hoops or dangling earrings).** This includes all facial piercings including but not limited to, eyebrow, cheek, lip, or big ear cartilage bars, or other visible piercings.
5. **Jewelry:** solid metal wedding/commitment bands only; dangling earrings are not permitted; single, simple necklace is permissible if it does not extend over uniform (certain jewelry may not be permitted in certain externship sites).
6. **Nails:** short, clean, and well-manicured **(not beyond tip of finger);** no nail polish, décor/jewelry, or acrylic nails.
7. **Hair:** Must be clean, neat, trimmed, off the collar, away from the face and secured (must not fall forward when bending over) with bangs no longer than eyebrows; securing devices must be simple/non-ornamental, preferably matching the hair color or white. No caps, headbands, bows, scarves, or bandanas. Due to the professional nature of the Veterinary Assisting profession, hair color that occurs in nature and a conservative cut and style is required.
8. **Make-up:** Mascara, eyeliner, lipstick, foundation, and eye shadow are acceptable if applied conservatively. **No artificial eyelashes are permitted.**
9. Gum chewing is inappropriate, unprofessional and is not permitted at any time while in uniform.
10. Smoking is not permitted at any time while in uniform. Students who are smokers will be required to practice meticulous hand hygiene prior to client contact.
11. Some agencies may require their own identification badges in addition to the one issued by the College. ID badge(s) must be worn at all times and always visible.
12. Lanyard (necklace) badge holders are not permitted to ensure the safety of the student.
13. Students who must wear a head covering and/or long sleeves due to religious preference or doctors order are to do the following:
    - Wear a white or black covering and if long, tuck it into the neck of their top.

NOTE: Faculty reserves the right to determine that an individual student's appearance may be inappropriate; accordingly, inappropriate attire may result in that student being dismissed from the externship or academic setting.

POLICIES & EXPECTATIONS

Classroom/Lab/Externship Site Etiquette

1.   Students must arrive on time and stay the entire scheduled session.
2.   Late students may not be allowed to enter the classroom/lab/site.
3.   Turn-off cell phone and other electronic devices. The student will be asked to leave class if seen using a cell phone or texting without Faculty permission.
4.   Use laptop computers/tablets only for class work. Students are encouraged to use their laptop computers/tablets during class only as learning aids as approved by faculty.
5.   No class may be recorded without the expressed consent of the instructor.
6.   Students are expected to remain engaged in the activities until the session ends.
7.   Be respectful to your peers and instructors. This includes talking out of turn, interrupting discussions, being late to class or leaving early.
8.   Students are expected to participate in class discussions when appropriate and respect the opinions of all class participants and to dialog in a professional and respectful manner.
9.   Students are required to refrain from using offensive or foul language in class.
10. Students are not permitted to bring children to class.
11. There may be instances where bringing a pet to class is approved by the Program Director. Please note that pets are not to be brought to class without prior approval from the Program Director.
12. No eating or drinking is allowed in the classrooms, computer labs or skills lab. Students are provided with breaks for this purpose.
13. Student must always be in uniform with ID name badge when on campus, skills lab, simulation, and externship rotations and are accountable to uphold the HCI College Veterinary Assisting Program Dress Code Policy.
14. Students are expected to follow all aspects of the College's conduct policy located in the HCI College Student Catalog.
15. Students are expected to participate in the clean-up of the lab and classroom prior to dismissal.

Classroom Expectations

Students are expected to come to class on time and ready to participate. They should wear the appropriate uniform during class and lab time as well as their nametag or student ID badge. Classroom etiquette is very important and must be observed and respected by all students. For instance, students are not to put their head down on the bench during the class as they may appear to be dosing off to others. No eating or drinking other than from sealed water bottles/packages. Adequate break time will be provided to have a snack or get up and move around. Talking, texting, reading emails and any other distracting activity is not permitted. Be sure to turn off or silence cell phones, beepers, or pagers during class/lab time and place them in a purse, or backpack under the desk except for classroom exercises that may require phone usage such as Kahoot or Google Classroom.

Academic Success

All program courses in the Veterinary Assisting Program must be completed with a grade of "C" (70%) or better in order to graduate. Students are required to repeat courses with grades of "D" or "F" and will be charged tuition and fees for repeating a course. Students must meet Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) to stay enrolled in college and be eligible for Financial Aid. Please refer to the HCI College Student Catalog for details on SAP, FA Warning, Dismissal, and Appeal processes. If a student needs to repeat a course, the student may have to wait until the course is offered again. Students may not repeat any course more than once.

Work Ethics

HCI College instructs and evaluates students on work ethics in all programs of study. Some work ethics traits that have been identified and defined as essential for student success are as follows: appearance, attendance, attitude, character, communication, cooperation, organizational skills, productivity, respect, and teamwork. As a student in this HCI College program, you will be expected to adhere to the highest standards of such character traits in your behavior as well as your coursework.

Out-of-Class Work

Post-secondary coursework requires that the student spend at least two hours of study time outside of the class time, for each hour of lecture received. Adequate time outside of class is necessary to prepare for classroom instruction, laboratory work, assignments, exams, and projects. Students should read textbook chapters prior to their being discussed in class, and they should come to class with all assignments complete and ready for discussion. Students must study for exams and quizzes, as well as review the principles required prior to attending laboratory settings. The textbook, assignments, projects, quizzes, and/or exams referenced in the course syllabus demonstrate the types of class preparation activities that are completed during this class preparation time.

Communication

Announcements
Moodle, HCI College's Online Learning Management Platform, will be utilized by faculty for submitting grades and course related communication with the student. It is the responsibility of the student to review Moodle daily.

Student/Faculty Communication
Students are encouraged to take all curriculum related questions and concerns to the appropriate faculty member. However, before and after class, instructors are often engaged in activities related to the learning activities of the day and may not be able to provide sufficient attention to address individual academic concerns. Faculty e-mail address and office hours are indicated on the course syllabi. It is recommended that students make appointments with faculty for individual academic issues to ensure appropriate attention can be provided to the student.

Please keep basic etiquette rules in mind when sending e-mail. Follow the specific instructor's directions regarding subject lines and attachments. Do not use "texting" abbreviations. Do not use all CAPITAL LETTERS. This can be interpreted as yelling. Check your spelling. Be courteous and avoid offensive language.

Course Delivery

Students entering the Veterinary Assisting Program can expect classroom and skills laboratory schedules to occur throughout the week both online and on campus. Additional class time or laboratory time may be scheduled by appointment with your instructor or Program Director for practice skills sessions, tutoring, and retention and critical thinking exercises.

The focus of laboratory sessions varies with didactic/classroom content; for example, a review of "order of draw" is the context for laboratory learning experiences relating to skills associated with phlebotomy. To maximize the potential for student learning in the classroom and laboratory sessions, maintaining flexibility in the sequencing of teaching/learning activities in these two areas increases the likelihood that the student will be able to apply what has been learned didactically and through externship experiences.

Orientation

Orientation is held prior to the first day of the students' first term; attendance is mandatory. Orientation is designed to facilitate the transition to HCI College and assist the student in preparing for the program of study. During orientation, students are acquainted with HCI College's mission, policies and procedures, academic standards, systems, study techniques, and counseling.

Graduation Ceremony

HCI College graduation ceremonies are held once a year. This event is attended by faculty, staff, and graduates from all academic programs. Veterinary Assisting students are strongly encouraged to participate in this event to share their accomplishment with fellow graduates, their families and friends, and all who have supported them throughout their student careers.

Student Participation in Program Governance

The Veterinary Assisting Program values input from students in developing and evaluating an effective Veterinary Assisting education program that is responsive to its students, externship agencies, prospective employers, the community, and professional standards and expectations. Students can provide input through completion of confidential surveys distributed at the end of each course.

Evaluation of Course and Program

Students are provided opportunities to evaluate the quality and appropriateness of classroom, skills laboratory, and externship instruction. HCI College requests students' completion of course evaluation forms every term. These evaluations are scheduled in advance. Additionally, students are asked to complete Veterinary Assisting Program specific course and program evaluations upon the completion of each course, as well as externship site evaluations. The results of such evaluations are compiled, analyzed, and utilized to improve the quality of academics and services provided to the student.

STUDENT ASSISTANCE

Academic Advisement

The Veterinary Assisting faculty believe in multiple methods of teaching and learning styles to maximize the learning of our students. Classroom instruction, simulation, blended content delivery and externship placements are some of the methods used.

Students with a grade below 70% must meet with their instructor to discuss an academic success plan. A student who receives a test score of less than 70% is required to make an appointment with the instructor to review the student's status, study habits, and to plan improvements. It is imperative to communicate with faculty at various stages throughout the semester. Frequent monitoring of grades is the responsibility of the student and should not be neglected until the end of the module.

It is the student's responsibility to notify faculty if they would like to make tutoring arrangements. Students experiencing life issues should be in contact with the faculty and the Program Director prior to experiencing a change in status.

Student Services

Please refer to the HCI College Student Catalog for the full spectrum of student services.

Accommodations

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 – The Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 504
HCI College recognizes and accepts its obligations under The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 and The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 prohibiting discrimination on the basis of a disability and requiring that reasonable accommodations be provided to qualified disabled students in all programs and activities within the control of the Institution, provided such accommodation would not impose an unreasonable burden on the College or other students.

Determination of reasonable accommodations and compliance with the ADA and Rehabilitation Act for students are managed by the Office of the President. No student shall be retaliated against for seeking accommodation

under this policy or for participating in good faith and in a reasonable manner in any review procedures concerning HCI College for its alleged noncompliance with The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

The following individual is HCI College's Section 504 Coordinator:

Celeste Blackwell
Chief Academic Office (CAO)/Senior Vice President of Academic Affairs
HCI College, 1764 N. Congress Avenue
West Palm Beach, FL 33409
Telephone: (561) 586-0121
Fax: (561) 471-4010
Email: celesteblackwell@hci.edu

Student Grievances

Every student has a right to procedural due process in which a student has notice and an opportunity to be heard. If the administration must take disciplinary measures against a student or other action related to a student, the student may appeal the decision to the Academic Administration.

Students are encouraged to resolve problems through normal administrative channels. Prior to filing a grievance, the student is encouraged to contact his/her instructor first, then the Program Director to determine if resolution can be achieved within the department.

Please refer to the HCI College Student Catalog for the Grievance Policy.

STUDENT RESOURCES

Tutoring

Tutoring services are available to promote student academic success. There are faculty tutors to assist students with specific course content. Individual assistance may be scheduled on a case-by-case basis with instructors. All other tutoring is by appointment coordinated through the Program Director/Dean of Academic Affairs. HCI College provides online tutoring services for nursing and general education courses twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week through Tutor.com.

Library Resources

The HCI College Library provides students access to books, periodicals, and electronic resources. Students are encouraged to use the library for class research projects. Help with research and projects is available within the library. Computers are available for student use. A student ID is required in order to check out any materials from the library. A self-service copier/printer is also available in the library.

HCI College is a member of the Library Information Resources Network (LIRN), an online educational database that provides increased access to articles and journals and a myriad of reference sources. A professionally trained librarian is on staff to assist the students, faculty and staff at HCI College during the Library's hours of operation, posted outside of the libraires at each campus, and by appointment.

ATTENDANCE

Regular and punctual attendance at classes, labs and externship is expected of all students and is an important aspect of meeting the objectives of the Veterinary Assisting program.

Faculty are required to take attendance and students are expected to arrive on time. Students are required to sign into each scheduled didactic, lab, and externship site on the record provided, using Coursekey, as they arrive to verify their attendance.

Students must submit to their Program Director all required externship time sheets every day at the end of their schedule to record hours mandated to pass the course. Students can take a photo of the original and email it to the Program Director. ALL originals are to be turned in at the end of the term and MUST match the ones submitted via email. Any unapproved alterations, inconsistencies, or disproportion of hours from emailed time sheets and the original will not be given and can be subject to investigation. Be honest and accurate. All time sheets are to be signed by the site supervisor prior to daily submission.

Attendance: Didactic, Laboratory or Externship

- Students are expected to arrive on time to every class.
- Tardy is considered after 10 minutes. Being tardy three times equals one absence.
- Continuous absences of on-campus or online classes will result in failure, as completion of required materials during online session or on-campus lab sessions cannot be completed. Students are responsible for material missed. There are no make-ups for lab skills or lab exams, quizzes, or in class assignments. Exceptions for extenuating circumstances may be made at the discretion of the Program Director.
- Excused absences will be considered only due to extenuating circumstances with verifiable documents e.g., death in the immediate family, medical emergency of student or immediate family member, or illness/injury to student that is accompanied by a healthcare provider note. Extenuating circumstances do NOT include illness/injury without a healthcare provider note, childcare issues, or absences due to work related duties. Upon the fourth unexcused course absence, the student will be withdrawn from that course.

Program Attendance Policy

The Veterinary Assisting Program has established a programmatic attendance policy that will help facilitate the learning of required knowledge, technical skills, and patient care vital to success in the Veterinary Assisting profession. The program acknowledges that emergency circumstances (i.e., funeral, deaths, and serious illnesses of immediate family) can occur; such events will be taken under advisement by the Program Director. However, students must provide the Program Director with documentation supporting their reason for being late and/or absent. It is required that students call their instructor ahead of time if they will not be able to attend class/externship or will be arriving late (refer to Proper Notification for Lateness/Absence).

Participation

All students are encouraged to attend class regularly with enthusiasm and to complete all course assignments on a timely basis. Attendance is essential for success in the class, as participation is measured in class, and information covered during class lecture and discussion are essential to understanding the concepts in the course.

Absences

Any material missed as a result of absences is the responsibility of the student and should be obtained from classmates. If you know you are going to be absent for some reason, inform the instructor in advance and turn in written assignments ahead of time whenever possible.

Proper Notification for Lateness/Absence

Class/Lab:
Students are expected to contact the instructor and Program Director via e-mail or phone before the start of the class if they will not be able to attend or will be arriving late. The message should include the reason (e.g., illness, family emergency).

- If a student is late for a test/exam, no additional time is given.
- If a student is absent on the day of a test/exam, it is to be made up in a timely fashion at the discretion of the Program Director. Make-up exams are modified from the original; there is an automatic 10% grade deduction.
- All lab experiences missed must be made up within 5 business days of the missed experience.

Externship:
- Failing to use proper notification procedures ("no call – no show") for Externship will be cause for administrative action. A pattern of this unprofessional behavior may result in course failure and/or dismissal from the program.
- **NOTE:** Asking a classmate to inform the instructor that you will be late/absent does NOT constitute proper notification.

Administrative Actions for Attendance Issues

Repeat patterns of poor attendance (a maximum of three Written Warnings throughout the duration of the program) can result in the student being dismissed from the program.

1. **Written Warning:** 1st offense of "no call – no show" for online, in class courses, or externship.
2. **Final Written Warning:** 2nd offense of "no-call – no show" for online, in class courses, or externship.
3. **Program Dismissal:** 3rd offense of 'no call – no show" for online, in class courses, or externship.

LATE WORK/MAKE-UP POLICY & PROCEDURES

Any class not attended detracts from the overall instruction being offered. Normally, instructors will make arrangements on the student's time, outside of class, to make up tests or other missed work at their discretion for excused absences. It is the responsibility of the student to contact each instructor and make appropriate arrangements before the next class meeting to complete any missed work. Tests and homework submitted after the due date will receive point reductions in grades for each day following the due date. If a test is not taken within four days after returning to class, a grade of zero may be recorded. Quizzes that are missed may be scheduled for a make-up at the sole discretion of the instructor.

Completion of Missed Work Due to Absence

If a student is absent from any learning activity, they are responsible for completing missed work at the discretion of the instructor. Students who are absent from laboratory experiences may not be permitted to participate in certain externship activities for safety reasons, due to lack of practice of hands-on skills.

Missed/Late Assignments

Students are expected to submit required homework/assignment on specified due dates. Any coursework not submitted on the due date is late and will receive a 10% deduction per late day up to day five (5) at which time a zero is recorded.

Missed/Make-Up Exam

There are no missed or make-up examinations in general. However, for extenuating circumstances, an alternate format make-up exam may be given at the discretion of the Program Director with verifiable documents to support an excused absence.

Arrangements will be made to take an alternate exam. Make-up exams will test the same content area but MUST include different questions, or a different format of questions (e.g., fill-in-the-blank, short-answer, case studies.). Make-up exam grades may have 10% deduction.

GRADING AND EVALUATION

Student's grades will be based on classroom participation, homework, in-class assignments, possible projects, and tests. The course grade will be computed according to the course syllabus for each course.

HCI College Grading System

Student performance is recorded in grades as follows:

A	=	90-100	=	4 grade points	Excellent
B	=	80-89	=	3 grade points	Very Good
C	=	70-79	=	2 grade points	Good
F	=	0-69	=	0 grade points	Failure
I	=	Incomplete			
T	=	Transfer			
AU	=	Audit			
P	=	Pass*			
NC	=	No Credit			
WA	=	Withdrawal (Administrative)			
W	=	Withdrawn (Withdrawal at student's request)			

For certain designated courses only. See Course Descriptions.

Note: The College may utilize C. and F. grades on transcripts. C. and F. grades do not fulfill graduation requirements. Students who have earned C. and/or F. grades on their transcripts must repeat the course and pass with the appropriate grade in order to fulfill graduation requirements.

Grading Policy

Each student's work is to be evaluated individually. Evaluation of student achievement and all Veterinary Assisting courses are calculated using only measurable academic assignments identified in the syllabus and directly related to course objectives.

All grades, including the final grade will be calculated as a whole number; HCI College does not round grades. Student achievement of course objectives are measured by objective formative and summative assessments as presented in the grading rubric or conversion score (i.e., exams, specialty exams, laboratory/simulation/externship evaluations, and other assignments. etc.).

All Veterinary Assisting courses with a combination of theory and laboratory, will each require a passing grade (minimum of 70%).

Student grades are comprised of attendance/participation, classwork, homework, online activities, and laboratory skills and are calculated at the discretion of the faculty.

Grade Appeal Procedures

Please refer to the HCI College Student Catalog for Grade Appeal Procedures.

Satisfactory Academic Progress

Please refer to the HCI College Student Catalog for the Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy.

Course Repeat Policy

If a student fails any course or receives an unsatisfactory grade of less than 70% (C), the student will be required to repeat the course.

- Depending on the length of time a student is out of the program, there could be a recommendation made by the Program Director to have the student audit previous course(s) to help re-establish lost skills or successfully complete a skills competency examination.
- A student may only repeat the same course twice. If the student fails the same course a second time, the student will be dismissed from the program, and will no longer be eligible for the Veterinary Assisting Program.
- Repeat of courses may or may not have to be paid out of pocket based on an individuals' financial aid package.

STUDENT CONDUCT POLICIES: ACADEMIC HONESTY & PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR

The College can best function and accomplish its mission in an atmosphere of high ethical standards. As such, the College expects students to observe all accepted principles of academic honesty. Academic honesty in the advancement of knowledge requires that students respect the integrity of one another's work and recognize the importance of acknowledging and safeguarding the validity of intellectual property. Students are expected to maintain complete honesty and integrity in all academic work attempted while enrolled at the College. Academic dishonesty is a serious violation of the trust upon which an academic community depends.

There are different forms of academic dishonesty including, but not limited to, the following:

Academic Honesty

Acquiring or Providing Information Dishonestly
Using unauthorized notes or other study aids during an examination; using unauthorized technology during an examination; improper storage of prohibited notes, course materials and study aids during an exam such that they are accessible or possible to view including, but not limited to, cell phones, laptops, tablets, etc.; looking at other students' work during an exam or in an assignment where collaboration is not allowed; attempting to communicate with other students in order to get help during an exam or in an assignment where collaboration is not allowed; obtaining an examination prior to its administration; altering graded work and submitting it for re-grading; allowing another person to do one's work and submitting it as one's own; or undertaking any activity intended to obtain an unfair advantage over other students.

Plagiarism
The deliberate or unintentional use of another's words or ideas without proper citation for which the student claims authorship. It is a policy of HCI College that students assume responsibility for maintaining honesty in all work submitted for credit and in any other work designated by an instructor of a course. Students may not submit the same work completed for one course in any other course, earning credit for the same work each time. Plagiarism, because it is a form of theft and dishonesty that interferes with the goals of education, must carry severe penalties. The penalties are as follows:

Partially Plagiarized Assignments:

- The first occurrence of a student turning in an assignment containing plagiarized material results in an automatic "F" for that assignment.
- The second occurrence of a student turning in an assignment containing plagiarized material results in an automatic "F" for the course.
- The third occurrence of a student turning in an assignment containing plagiarized material results in an automatic dismissal from the College.

Entirely Plagiarized Assignments:

- The first occurrence of a student turning in an entire plagiarized assignment results in an automatic "F" for the course.
- The second occurrence of a student turning in an entire plagiarized assignment results in an automatic dismissal from the College.

On written papers for which the student employs information gathered from books, articles, electronic, or oral sources, each direct quotation, as well as ideas and facts that are not generally known to the public at large, or the form, structure, or style of a secondary source must be attributed to its author by means of the appropriate citation procedure. Only widely known facts and first-hand thoughts and observations original to the student do not require citations. Citations may be made in footnotes or within the body of the text. Plagiarism also consists of passing off as one's own, segments or the total of another's work.

At HCI College, references are cited in accordance with the American Psychological Association (APA) approved format. Guidelines for the appropriate use of this format for citing references are included in the appendices of this Handbook and assignments may be used by the College to assist in future education by students.

Students retain the right to appeal for readmission.

Anti-Plagiarism Software
HCI College provides the anti-plagiarism software, Turnitin for all students to be able to submit their work product through a check prior to turning in for a grade. A link to this software is available in the student's Moodle classroom.

Conspiracy
Agreeing with one or more persons to commit any act of academic dishonesty.

Fabrication of Information
 Falsifying or inventing any information, citation, or data; using improper methods of collecting or generating data and presenting them as legitimate; misrepresenting oneself or one's status in the College; perpetrating hoaxes unbecoming to students in good standing or potentially damaging to the College's reputation or that of the members of its academic community of students and scholars.

Multiple Submissions
Submitting the same work for credit in two different courses without the instructor's permission.

Facilitating Academic Dishonesty
Aiding another person in an act that violates the standards of academic honesty; allowing other students to look at one's own work during an exam or in an assignment where collaboration is not allowed; providing information, material, or assistance to another person knowing that it may be used in violation of course, departmental, or HCI College academic honesty policies; providing false information in connection with any academic honesty inquiry.

Abuse or Denying Others Access to Information or Resource Materials
Any act that maliciously hinders the use of or access to library or course materials; the removing of pages from books or journals or reserve materials; the removal of books from libraries without formally checking out the items; the intentional hiding of library materials; the refusal to return reserve readings to the library; or obstructing or interfering with another student's academic work. All these acts are dishonest and harmful to the community.

Falsifying Records and Official Documents

Forging signatures or falsifying information on official academic documents such as drop/add forms, incomplete forms, petitions, letters of permission, or any other official HCI College document.

Externship Misconduct

Dishonesty in the externship setting includes but is not limited to misrepresenting completion of externship hours or assignments; falsification of patient records; fabrication of patient experiences; failure to report omission of, or error in, assessments, treatments, or medications; and appropriation/stealing of facility, client, staff, visitor and/or student property.

Disclosure of Confidential Information

A high, responsible standard of conduct and professionalism is expected from each student. Students are personally accountable for the way in which patient information and other confidential information in externship facilities is utilized. Confidential information is never to be discussed with anyone other than those directly involved in the care of the patient or in the legitimate use of other confidential agency information. Those having access to patient, salary, or associate information should never browse such information out of "curiosity." It is to be used and accessed only for legitimate, externship/learning purposes.

A breach in confidentiality which involves discussing and/or releasing confidential patient or facility information, or obtaining unauthorized system access, will lead to disciplinary action from HCI College.

Each student must seriously evaluate his/her daily use of confidential patient or facility information to assure its proper use. When in doubt, students should seek clarification or direction from their immediate supervisor.

Sanctions for Violating the Academic Honesty Policy

If it is determined that the student has violated the Academic Honesty Policy:

1. The student (s) will be sent home for the day.
2. The student will be notified the following day if they are removed from the program of study.

Students who have been dismissed will not be allowed to return that semester.

HCI College believes strongly that each student against whom the College is forced to act upon, has a right to procedural due process where the student has notice and an opportunity to be heard. If the administration must take disciplinary measures against a student or other action related to the student, the student may appeal the decision by submitting a letter of appeal to the Dean of Academic Affairs. The procedures for the grievance are found in the HCI College Student Catalog.

HCI College has established a set of professional behaviors which will help students develop their knowledge and skills for entry-level positions in their fields.

- Adhere to HCI College policies and procedures as outlined in the HCI College Student Catalog.
- Adhere to program policies and procedures as outlined in the program student handbook(s).
- Adhere to policies and procedures of the externship education site where assigned.
- Arrive to class and externship sites on time; punctuality is a demonstration of professional behavior.
- Demonstrate responsibility and accountability in all aspects of the educational process.
- Demonstrate appropriate communication, interaction and behavior toward other students, faculty, and externship staff.
- Respect the learning environment regarding visitors. Visitors may not attend class or the externship education site. This includes children, spouses, parents, friends, animals, or any other visitor.

If a student demonstrates inappropriate professional behavior, the student may receive a written behavior warning or be placed on probation depending on the severity of the action (see Behavior Probation Statement below). The program reserves the right to withdraw the student at any time if the inappropriate behavior is judged extreme as determined by the program director and dean of academic affairs.

Behavior Probation Statement

Students who do not maintain satisfactory behavior, both academically and in externship, may be placed on probation. The term of probation will become effective in the semester the student is currently enrolled in and remain in place for the remainder of the following semester. At the completion of the following semester, the program director or dean will assess the student's progress and determine whether to remove the student from probation or to extend the term of probation. Failure to meet the terms of probation as outlined in a student action plan will result in dismissal from the program. If additional unsatisfactory behavior should occur during the remainder of the program, the student will be dismissed from the program and HCI College and will be ineligible for re-entry to the College.

Externship Experience – Request for Removal of Student

Should an externship site request removal of a scheduled student due to the student's inability or unwillingness to abide by the program's and/or externship site's policies and procedures, the student will receive an externship evaluation grade of "zero" and be placed on behavior probation which may result in a failing grade and/or dismissal from the program.

Upon removal from the externship site, the program will attempt to re-assign the student to a different externship site. However, should a second incident occur during the same externship rotation/course in which an externship site requests the removal of the student, the program will immediately remove the student from the site and provide no further externship re- assignments. This action will result in the student receiving a failing grade for the externship rotation/course and subsequently not permitted to advance to the next core course.

The student may wish to apply for re-entry to the program when the course re- sequences. However, re-entry to the program is contingent upon:

- The program not exceeding maximum program capacity; and
- A review of events leading up to the dismissal with a student action plan designed by the program director addressing professional behavior expectations.

If a student has been re-assigned to an externship education site due to a request for removal from a previously assigned externship site based on inappropriate behavior, and similar inappropriate behavior occurs in a subsequent externship rotation/course, the student will not be re-assigned for externship placement and will be permanently dismissed from the program.

It should be noted that if the cause for removing a student from an externship site is deemed by the program director and dean of academic affairs as extreme unprofessional behavior, the student may be immediately dismissed from the program and/or the College.

Conflict Resolution and Chain of Command

Students are encouraged to first discuss any concerns with their instructor. If the concern is not resolved, they should speak to their Program Director. Subsequent levels are the Dean of Academic Affairs and the Campus President/Director. Chain of command should always be utilized for prompt resolution.

RESTROOM DESIGNATION

At HCI College, we want to ensure a safe place for everyone: students, faculty and staff. Therefore, HCI College, in accordance with recent law, designates its restroom policy based on biological sex at birth (i.e., male or female). Specifically, restrooms are designated for exclusive use by males or females (as defined in Section 553.865(3), Florida Statutes), unless there is a unisex restroom.

In order to ensure a safe place, any student who willfully enters a restroom or changing facility of the opposite sex, and who refuses to depart when asked to do so by a College administrator, faculty member, security personnel or law enforcement personnel, absent certain statutory exceptions, is subject to immediate disciplinary action up to and including expulsion from the College.

Any administrative personnel and instructional personnel, including faculty members who willfully enters a restroom of the opposite sex, and who refuses to depart when asked to do so by a College administrator, faculty member security personnel or law enforcement personnel, absent certain statutory exceptions, is subject to immediate disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Should you have any questions about these policies, please contact the Group Campus President/COO.

ACADEMIC AND ADMINISTRATIVE DISMISSAL

A student may be dismissed from HCI College for disregarding administrative policies.

Causes for dismissal include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Failure to meet minimum educational standards established by the program in which the student is enrolled.

Failure to meet student responsibilities including, but not limited to:

- Meeting of deadlines for academic work and tuition payments.
- Provision of documentation, corrections and/or new information as requested.
- Notification of any information that has changed since the student's initial application.
- Purchase or otherwise furnish required supplies.
- Maintenance of HCI College property in a manner that does not destroy or harm it.
- Return of library books in a timely manner and payment of any fines that may be imposed.
- Obtaining required education and financial clearance prior to graduation and to comply with all parking regulations.
- Continued inappropriate personal appearance.
- Continued unsatisfactory attendance.
- Non-payment for services provided by the College.
- Failure to comply with policies and procedures listed in the current HCI College Student Catalog and student handbook; or conduct prejudicial to the class, program or HCI College.

Specific behaviors that may be cause for dismissal include, but are not limited to:

- Willful destruction or defacement of HCI College or student property.
- Theft of student or HCI College property.
- Improper or illegal conduct, including hazing, sexual harassment, etc.
- Use, possession, and/or distribution of alcoholic beverages, illegal drugs, and/or paraphernalia on campus.
- Being under the influence of alcoholic beverages or illegal drugs while on campus.
- Cheating, plagiarism, and/or infractions of HCI College's Student Conduct Policies.
- Any behavior which distracts other students and disrupts routine classroom activities.
- Use of abusive language, including verbalization or gestures of an obscene nature; or threatening or causing physical harm to students, faculty, staff, or others on campus or while students are engaged in off-site learning experiences.

STUDENT DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES

If a student violates HCI College's Standards of Conduct in a classroom, the first level of discipline lies with the faculty member. If a situation demands further action, the Director of Veterinary Assisting is responsible. If a student has a serious objection to the disciplinary action imposed, the student has the right to use the grievance process as outlined in the HCI College Student Catalog.

When a student violates HCI College's Standards of Conduct outside of the classroom but on-campus, the Director of Veterinary Assisting is the first level of discipline. The next level is the Dean of Academic Affairs. If a student is dissatisfied with the disciplinary action imposed, the student has the right to use the grievance process as outlined in the HCI College Student Catalog.

HCI COLLEGE/COURSE WITHDRAWAL

When a student withdraws from HCI College, written notice must be submitted to the Registrar by the student, or a parent or guardian. Such notice should contain the reason for the withdrawal.

Refer to the HCI College Student Catalog for more information on the withdrawal process and necessary documentation.

HCI COLLEGE

VETERINARY ASSISTING STUDENT
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RESPONSIBILITIES

By initialing the following, the undersigned student acknowledges receipt of the materials listed and agreement to abide by the policies contained within the current HCI College Student Catalog.

_____ HCI College Admission Documentation, Externship/Classroom Skills Training, and Attendance Policy.

_____ Current HCI College Veterinary Assisting Student Handbook.

_____ I understand that I am to only function under the direct supervision of the site manager during all externship experiences.

_____ I understand that I will not be used to meet staffing requirements at the externship agency.

_____ I understand the passing grade for any Veterinary Assisting course is outlined in the appropriate syllabus.

_____ I acknowledge that I have been fully advised that my program of study may require exposure to blood and body fluids while performing universal precautions; as well as conducting myself in a professional manner by attending externship sessions on time. I further acknowledge my responsibility to only perform the above activities under direct supervision of the site manager.

_____ I agree to hold HCI College harmless for any and all consequences (including transmission of blood borne pathogens) of such participation which are not the fault nor within the control of HCI College.

_____ I acknowledge my responsibility under federal applicable law and agree to keep confidential any information regarding externship facility patients, as well as any other confidential information of the facility. I agree, under penalty of law, not to reveal to any person or persons except authorized externship staff and associated personnel, any specific information regarding any patient. I further agree not to reveal to any third party any confidential information from the facility.

_____ I understand that I cannot be subject to call/duty in any way during didactic, skills, or externship portions of the program.

_____ I understand that I must have my HCI College student badge visible at all times while serving in the capacity of an HCI College Veterinary Assisting student.

_____ I understand that it is my responsibility to review the Veterinary Assisting Student Handbook in its entirety and seek clarification on any questions, concerns or points in which I need clarification.

_____ I understand that the Veterinary Assisting Student Handbook may be amended and/or changed during my enrollment.

_____ In the event of any change or amendment during my enrollment, I will receive notification of the changes. I understand that it is my responsibility to review the changes and/or amendments in their entirety. I will seek clarification on any questions, concerns, or points for which I do not understand.

_____ I understand that it is my responsibility to follow all policies and procedures as outlined.

_____ I understand if I fail to adhere to the requirements, I may be withdrawn or receive a failure for the course.

I HAVE READ AND UNDERSTAND THE INFORMATION CONTAINED IN THIS DOCUMENT. FURTHERMORE, I UNDERSTAND THAT FAILURE TO MEET AND COMPLY WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF THIS PROGRAM MAY RESULT IN MY TERMINATION FROM THE PROGRAM.

Student Printed Name	Student Signature	Date

Instructor/Witness Name	Instructor/Witness Signature	Date