UNIVERSITY OF NEW MEXICO – VALENCIA CAMPUS

PERSONAL CARE ATTENDANT PROGRAM (5 CREDITS)

SYLLABUS – Fall 2025

PCA-101-550

This course is a wonderful opportunity to gain the skills needed to provide 'hands-on' client care under the supervision of a nurse. It is also an opportunity to be part of a healthcare team and experience the many opportunities the healthcare field offers.

Hours/Days/Location

Lecture: UNM-VC RM 201 M-W From 12:00pm-1:40pm
Skills Laboratory: UNM-VC Nursing Lab
Job Shadow Experience: To be determined (Good Life & The Beehive)
Office Hours: By Appointment, and T & W 1:45pm-3:30pm
Instructor: Maria Luna, RN, MSN-Ed
Contact: mluna5@unm.edu or via Canvas inbox

Textbook and Workbook

Providing Home Care: A Textbook for Home Health Aides, 7th Edition, William Leahy, MD

Course Objectives

Students prepare to work as a Personal Care Attendant in home healthcare, Assisted Living, Community Living, or as independent contractors/self-employed. The course includes lectures, group learning, video instruction, demonstrations, skills practice, writing assignments, and exams. A UNM-Valencia Campus Certificate of Completion is awarded upon successful completion of this course.

The 64 hours of classroom and lab skills practice enables students to obtain introductory knowledge of basic theoretical areas: Anatomy & Physiology, Aging, Client Safety, Communication skills, Cultural Competency, Medical Terminology and a variety of other subjects. This course will also permit students to learn, practice and observe basic nursing skills in a laboratory and healthcare setting. A 16 hour supervised clinical shadow experience in a health care facility and guest speakers permits students to observe safe, basic, patient care skills and utilize the basic nursing knowledge attained.

Course Hours

Total: 80 Contact Hours (5 Credit Hours)
64 hours – Lecture and Skills Training
16 hours – Job Shadow (Clinical)
No prerequisites. Students must meet health and background requirements prior to clinical attendance.

Teaching/Learning Strategies

Instruction methods will vary and include: lecture, discussion, work groups, workbook exercises and clinical skills practice. The clinical portion of this course will include demonstration of practical skills. This practical experience will take place in a 'student to patient' situation in the clinical facility setting.

Student Learning Objectives

1. Demonstrate basic caregiver skills with an emphasis on patient safety.
2. Demonstrate knowledge of basic medical terminology.
3. Exhibit professionalism and competence as a Personal Care Attendant.
4. Demonstrate knowledge of basic anatomy and physiology.
5. Apply knowledge of local, state, and federal guidelines that apply to healthcare.
6. Demonstrate team-building and communication skills, work ethics, and job-seeking skills.

Student Responsibilities

7. Students must be present, prepared, and punctual for all class sessions, review chapters prior to class, complete all activities as directed, and maintain professional conduct.
8. Complete all activities as directed. [Full credit given for homework submitted by due date.]
9. Academic dishonesty and disciplinary issues: Students will maintain the highest standards of honesty and integrity in accordance with the UNM Student Code of Conduct.
10. Students will conduct themselves professionally at all times. Inappropriate language and disruptive behavior is not professional, and will not be tolerated.

Qualifications for Attendance to the Job Shadow

- Meet the attendance policy.
- Achieve 80% in each laboratory skill.
- Attain 80% or better on homework, exams and class performance.
- Performance of basic caregiving skills in a safe, independent and professional manner.
- Have necessary equipment required.
- Obtain a completed Health Form indicating the ability to lift at least 50 pounds without assistance, up to date Immunization record, Tuberculosis test, 10 panel Urine Drug Screen and possess AHA BLS Healthcare Provider CPR Certification (online courses will not be accepted).

Attendance Policy

No more than 12 hours of absence during lecture and skills lab combined. Arrangements must be made by the students to make up missed work. **ABSOLUTELY NO ABSENCE IS ALLOWED DURING CLINICAL. Tardiness >10 minutes results in the session being counted as an absence.**

Emergency Zoom Attendance Policy

In-person attendance is required for all classes. In rare, verifiable emergencies (e.g., illness, transportation breakdown, urgent family matter), students may attend via Zoom with prior instructor approval.

- **Approval:** The student must contact the instructor *before class begins* to request Zoom access and explain the emergency.
- **Credit Reduction:** Students attending via Zoom for the *entire* 1 hour 40-minute class will receive credit for **75 minutes** of attendance (25%-time deduction). This reflects that Zoom participation is not equivalent to in-person attendance.
- **Limits:** May be used no more than **two times per semester**.
- **Requirements:** Camera must remain on, student must be clearly visible, and active participation is required for credited minutes.
- **Instructor Discretion:** Abuse of this privilege will result in loss of Zoom access for the remainder of the semester.

Lab Fees:
As per UNM-Valenica policy.

Homework Policy
You will receive a 20% deduction for late homework assignments if turned in on the next class day. Homework submitted thereafter will not be accepted.

Grading Policy
Homework – 15%

Class participation – 10%

Exams – 10%

Laboratory Skills Practicum – 15%

Job Shadow Experience – 25%

Comprehensive Written Final Exam – 25%

Letter Grading Scheme
A: 90–100%
B: 80–89% **(80% required for UNM Certificate)**
C: 70–79%
D: 60–69%
F: 0–59%

Laboratory Skill Practice and Health Care Facility Dress Code
Professional Dress and Grooming Standards
Students are required to present a professional appearance at all times in lab and clinical settings.

Uniform & Equipment
- Scrub uniform: Beige top and beige pants

- White or mostly white **closed-toe, clean shoes**
- Watch with a second hand
- Small notebook & pen
- School ID

Personal Appearance

- ***Tattoos:*** Must be completely covered while in class, lab, or clinical.
- ***Jewelry:*** Must be conservative. Only the following are permitted:
    - A watch with a second hand
    - A wedding ring or one simple ring on a single finger
    - One stud earring per ear (must not extend beyond the earlobe)
    - No other visible piercings (eyebrow, nose, tongue, etc.)
    - No chokers, necklaces, bracelets, or dangling earrings for safety reasons.
- ***Hair & Facial Hair:*** Must be neat, clean, and trimmed. Hair that touches the collar must be secured back away from the face.
- ***Nails:*** Must be short, clean, well-manicured, and natural.
    - **NO Artificial** nails, gel nails, chipped, peeling, or cracked polish allowed.
- ***Fragrances:*** No perfume, aftershave, or scented hair products (offensive to many patients).
- ***Other:*** Chewing gum is not acceptable during lab practice or clinical.

These dress and hygiene standards follow the Allied Health Program Student Handbook and are mandatory. Students not in compliance will be sent home and marked absent for that class or clinical session.

Course Outline

The Curriculum Includes:

- Home Healthcare Profession Overview
- ISP / Plan of Care
- Emergency Procedures
- Infection Control
- Body Mechanics & Mobility

- Aging (changes & dementia)
- Personal Care (bathing, oral hygiene, dressing)
- Elimination (toileting, catheter care)
- Nutrition & Safe Food Handling
- Home Management Skills
- Vital Signs
- Medication Assistance
- Cultural Sensitivity
- Customer Service & Communication
- State/Federal/Agency Policies
- Support Services
- Death & Dying, Self-Determination
- Clinical Job Shadowing

Electronic Devices

All electronic devices must be turned off during class. Any electronic equipment brought to class must be approved by the instructor before use in class. Unsafe, offensive or disruptive behavior in a clinical or classroom setting can be grounds for failure of class.

Confidentiality

Patient/Resident/Class Confidentiality must be maintained at all times during the off-site job shadow experience. Failure to do so will result in immediate removal from the PCA program. Confidentiality is required by Federal law under HIPAA Regulations.

Course Requirements

To participate in the laboratory skills or at the job shadow site, students must be able to lift at least 50 pounds without assistance. Students must return a completed health form signed by a healthcare provider to Allied Health Dept Staff at UNM-VC along with an up-to-date immunization record, TB test, and drug screen.

Job Shadow facilities require fingerprinting and an FBI background check before entering the facility. The cost will be approximately $88.30. Students are responsible for scheduling and payment.

All documentation and background checks must be completed by **due date set by the Allied Health Program Coordinator, or the student will be withdrawn from the course.**

Students With Special Needs

In accordance with University Policy 2310 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), any student needing academic accommodations should first contact Equal Access Services at 925-8840.

Accommodations: UNM is committed to providing equitable access to learning opportunities for students with documented disabilities. As your instructor, it is my objective to facilitate an inclusive classroom setting, in which students have full access and opportunity to participate. To engage in a confidential conversation about the process for requesting reasonable accommodations for this class and/or program, **please contact the UNM-Valencia Equal Access Services (Sarah Clawson, Coordinator), at (505) 925-8840 or by email at sjclawson@unm.edu. Or the UNM Albuquerque Accessibility Resource Center (https://arc.unm.edu/) at arcsrvs@unm.edu or by phone at 505-277-3506.**

Title IX – Respectful Campus

UNM is committed to providing a safe and respectful learning environment for all students, faculty, and staff. Any form of discrimination, harassment, sexual misconduct, or retaliation will not be tolerated.

UAP 2720 and 2740: Our classroom and university should foster mutual respect, kindness, and support. If you have concerns about discrimination, harassment, or violence, please seek support and report incidents. Find confidential services at LoboRESPECT Advocacy Center, the Women's Resource Center, and the LGBTQ Resource Center. UNM prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex (including gender, sex stereotyping, gender expression, and gender identity). All instructors are "responsible employees" who must communicate reports of sexual harassment, sexual misconduct and sexual violence to Compliance, Ethics and Equal Opportunity. For more information, please see UAP 2720 and UAP 2740.

Religious and Cultural Practices

In accordance with UNM policy, students who anticipate being absent from class due to the observance of major religious holidays or significant cultural practices should notify the instructor in advance. Reasonable accommodations will be made to allow students to complete missed work without penalty. Students remain responsible for all material covered during any absence.

Respectful behavior and absences

Respectful Conduct Expectations: I am committed to building with you a positive classroom environment in which everyone can learn. I reserve the right to intervene and enforce standards of respectful behavior when classroom conduct is inconsistent with University expectations [and/or classroom community agreements. Interventions and enforcement may include but are not limited to required meetings to discuss classroom expectations, written notification of expectations,

and/or removal from a class meeting. Removal from a class meeting will result in a loss of class hours and course failure if the required number of hours is not met. The University of New Mexico ensures freedom of academic inquiry, free expression and open debate, and a respectful campus through adherence to the following policies: D75: Classroom Conduct, Student Code of Conduct, University Policy 2240 – Respectful Campus, University Policy 2210 – Campus Violence.

Disruptive Behavior

Students are expected to adhere to the UNM Student Code of Conduct and maintain a respectful, professional learning environment at all times, both in the classroom and in clinical settings.

Examples of disruptive behavior include, but are not limited to:

- Talking out of turn or interrupting
- Use of cell phones or electronic devices without permission
- Disrespectful language or conduct toward classmates, instructors, or patients
- Refusal to follow safety instructions in the lab or clinical setting

Under UNM policy and federal protections of students' rights, a student will not be dropped for a one-time occurrence of disruptive behavior. However:

- **Any disruptive behavior will result in the student being asked to leave the class meeting.**
- The time missed will count against the student's required contact hours for the course.
- If the student's total attended hours fall below the required minimum to pass the course, the student will receive a failing grade.

Academic honesty and AI use

Responsible Learning and Academic Honesty: Cheating and plagiarism (academic dishonesty) are often driven by lack of time, desperation, or lack of knowledge about how to identify a source. Communicate with me and ask for help, even at the last minute, rather than risking your academic career by committing academic dishonesty. Academic dishonesty involves claiming that work created by another source is your own original work. It is a Student Code of Conduct violation that can lead to a disciplinary procedure. When you use a resource in work submitted for this class, document how you used it and distinguish clearly between your original work and the material taken from the resource.

Encouraging use of supports and resources:

Thriving and Finding Support: Students are especially successful at UNM when they take advantage of support and get involved in campus and academic life. Your MyUNM login page provides direct links to wellbeing resources, including financial capability, mental health, food, jobs, and resource centers. MyUNM will help you identify academic resources like peer tutoring

and opportunities like study abroad. You can contact academic advisors and resource advisors for information and guidance via Student Hub on MyUNM. I look forward to providing you with information about academic opportunities related to our class and to helping you find support resources.

Credit-Hour Statement

This is a **5-credit-hour** course. In accordance with UNM policy, students are expected to spend a minimum of **15 hours per week** on this course. This includes scheduled class and lab time as well as additional hours spent on reading, assignments, skills practice, and preparation for exams and clinical experiences.

Clinical and Laboratory Skills Equipment

- Required scrub uniform (beige top/beige pants)
- White or light colored closed-toe shoes
- Gait belt
- Watch with a second hand
- Stethoscope
- Small notebook and black pen
- School picture ID
- Adult size blood pressure cuff

Portfolio Requirements

- CPR for HealthCare Providers (BLS) card, current
- Department of Health Forms
- Completed health form and updated immunization record
- Documentation of Hepatitis B series, MMR, Varicella, TB test, Tdap, Influenza
- Current 10-panel drug screen

*The instructor reserves the right to make changes to the syllabus, schedule, or course policies as needed to meet the learning needs of the class or to respond to unexpected circumstances. Any changes will be communicated promptly through Canvas and/or in class. Students are responsible for reviewing announcements and updates.