



**2021-2022**  
**Student Handbook**  
**For Diploma**  
**Programs**

## **Greater Altoona Career & Technology Center**

### ***Continuing Education***

1500 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Altoona, PA 16602

[www.gactc.edu](http://www.gactc.edu) (814) 941-8324

The administration, faculty, and staff welcome you to the Greater Altoona Career & Technology Center (GACTC). We are committed to providing students with the skills and support necessary to become successful in the workforce. The policies and procedures contained in this handbook are provided to assist you in adjusting to the challenges of our postsecondary programming and expectations as a postsecondary student. In order to guarantee you the best education possible, we expect you to adhere to the policies and procedures under which our school operates. The information presented in this handbook will assist you in becoming familiar with the policies and procedures for postsecondary educational programs of the GACTC. Please contact the Continuing Education Office with any questions and make certain to take advantage of the services provided.

This handbook is for information only. The provisions of the handbook are not to be construed as representing contractual or any other obligations of the Greater Altoona Career & Technology Center. The GACTC expressly reserves the right to increase, decrease, withdraw, cancel, reschedule, repeal, change, modify or amend any provisions, policies, requirements, rules, charges, fees, expenses, courses, programs of study, degrees, and other academic regulations. The GACTC further reserves the right to dismiss a student from the school for cause at any time. It also reserves the right to impose probation, suspension or other disciplinary action on any student whose conduct or achievement is unsatisfactory. When a student is dismissed or suspended for cause, there will be no refund of tuition or fees paid. Neither will there be any refunds in the event the operation of the GACTC is temporarily suspended as a result of any act of God, strike, work stoppage, disruption, or any other reason beyond its control. Other refund policies are stated elsewhere in this handbook. Admission to and attendance at the GACTC is a privilege and not a right. Membership at the GACTC bears with it the responsibility to adhere to its policies and regulations.

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## Section 1: Information about the GACTC

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### Mission & Philosophy

The mission of the Greater Altoona Career and Technology Continuing Education Office is to provide occupation-specific education for adults in collaboration with business, labor, and our communities in preparation for the demands of the current workforce. The Continuing Education Office further believes that vocational technical education should be an integral part of lifelong education with a dual purpose: (a) to provide individuals with the skills and knowledge needed to enter employment or to pursue further education; and (b) to assist in the economic development of the area by providing business and industry with productive, adaptable, and competent workers.

The Continuing Education Office subscribes to the philosophy that it can enrich an ever-expanding community by providing educational programs to help each individual student grow as a person, as an employee, and as a citizen. This institution recognizes that an ever growing number of persons are in need of experiences that will allow them to compete in and contribute to the rapidly changing technological society. The Continuing Education Office believes that education is a continuing need for every citizen. It stands ready to provide training and enrichment for all members of the community, both through formal instruction in all areas of adult needs and interests, and through informal means by its involvement in community affairs.

In sum, the Continuing Education Office believes it is uniquely fitted through its diversified, yet united programs to contribute to the development of the individuals within the geographic area it serves and thus, the development of the area itself. It believes that, to function in a society marked by rapid technological advancement and vast diversification and specialization, the individual needs to acquire an understanding both broad and deep of the great inherited body of knowledge.

### Accreditation

The GACTC has institutional accreditation through the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, Commissions of Elementary and Secondary Schools. A number of individual programs meet specific industry skill standards and hold additional certifications and accreditations.



Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools  
Commissions of Elementary and Secondary Schools

### Non-discrimination Policy

It is the policy of the Greater Altoona Career and Technology Center to ensure an equal opportunity in employment and programs, services, and activities without any consideration of an individual's race, color, national origin, sex, gender identity or expression, age, religion, disability, veteran status, genetic information, and/or any other characteristic protected by federal, state or local law. For information regarding civil rights, grievance procedures or access, contact Title IX Section 504 Coordinator, Michael Selvenis, at 1500 Fourth Avenue, Altoona, PA 16602-3695, email [mike.selvenis@gactc.edu](mailto:mike.selvenis@gactc.edu), or telephone (814) 946-8457.

### Employee Directory

The GACTC Staff Directory is available on our website at <https://www.gactc.edu/directory/>. To contact the Continuing Education Office or Practical Nursing Program Office, please call (814) 941-8324 or email [adulded@gactc.edu](mailto:adulded@gactc.edu).

## **Parking**

Students are permitted to park in the designated parking lots with display of a GACTC-issued parking permit. Student parking is available in lots #3, #4, and #5. Handicapped parking is provided to individuals with the appropriate state approved license plate or window card in lot #2.

The school recommends that you refrain from parking in front of homes around the GACTC. For most homeowners, the space in front of their homes is their only place to park. Especially during winter months, this space is cleaned by them. Please respect these homes as if they were your own.

## **Building Security & Access**

Security officers, greeters, video cameras, limited access, and the occasional use of metal detectors are all methods in place to ensure the safety and protection of our students and staff. Students must always display respect and courtesy toward the officers and greeters and comply with their requests (present ID, etc.). Outside entrances are monitored and some are locked during the school day to limit access to the public.

Please access the GACTC through the main entrance on 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue unless otherwise directed by the Continuing Education Office. Doors are locked at all times; please use the buzzer to gain entry to the building.

## **First Aid Services**

The GACTC's first aid assistant is located on the second floor in room C233. The first aid assistant is available to any adult student who is ill or injured while attending the GACTC. All accidents and illness should be reported to the instructor and Continuing Education Office. According to Pennsylvania School Law, the school is not permitted to dispense over the counter medications, i.e., Tylenol, aspirin, cold medications, etc.

## **Building Evacuation/Fire Drills**

In the event of a school emergency requiring evacuation of the building, an announcement will be made over the public address system. Following this announcement, all staff and students will exit the school in a quick and orderly fashion. Wheelchair-bound and/or handicapped students that require assistance during building evacuations are to be identified to the Continuing Education Coordinator, and their instructors will be issued special instructions to ensure the students' safety. Elevators are not permitted to be used during fire drills or in the event of an actual fire. No persons are permitted to return to the building until instructed to return by the GACTC administration.

## **Building Closures, Delays, and Cancellations**

There are certain occasions that may require the GACTC to cancel class for various circumstances, including inclement weather. If the school is closed due to inclement weather conditions, all in-person classes are also cancelled. Instructors may provide alternative methods of instructions, such as video conferencing, virtual work, etc. You will be notified of delays, closures, and/or cancellations. We encourage students to use good judgment and arrive as soon as possible or notify the Continuing Education or Practical Nursing Program Offices at (814) 941-8324 if you are not able to attend class for any reason.

## Section 2: Admissions

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### Admission Requirements

The GACTC welcomes all interested individuals to submit applications for admission into GACTC full- and part-time diploma programs. Acceptance to GACTC and the intended adult education program is based upon the following admission criteria and availability in the intended program. Please reference the GACTC Practical Nursing Handbook for the admissions requirements for the Practical Nursing program.

To be considered for admission for a full-time adult education diploma program (except for the Practical Nursing diploma program), prospective students must complete the following:

- Application for Admission - application available at <https://www.gactc.edu/adult-education/how-to-enroll/>.
- Official copy of the applicant's final high school transcript, documentation of completion of a high school equivalency (i.e. GED), or equivalent foreign education as verified by a GACTC-approved credential evaluation service. Applicants who apply during their senior year of high school must provide an official copy of their final transcript following graduation from high school.
- PA Criminal Record Information: Applicants must submit a Criminal Background History from the PA State Police that is within 1 year of the date of the application to the GACTC. Applicants may request the background record from the PATCH system at <https://epatch.state.pa.us/Home.jsp>. The PA State Police Criminal Background History requires a \$22.00 fee for processing. The GACTC reserves the right to deny applicants to postsecondary educational programs based on the results of the criminal background check. GACTC reserves the right to accept an applicant with a criminal background based on the severity, date(s), and frequency of the conviction(s).
- PA Child Abuse Clearance: Applicants must submit a PA Child Abuse Clearance that is within 1 year of the date of application to the GACTC. To request this clearance, please visit <https://www.compass.state.pa.us/cwis/public/home> to create an individual account. Please follow the instructions to apply for the PA Child Abuse History Clearance. The purpose of the clearance (within the online clearance request) is "School Employee". The applicant will receive an email when the clearance has been prepared. Please provide to the Continuing Education office. There is a \$13.00 fee for the PA Child Abuse History Clearance. The GACTC reserves the right to deny applicants entrance to postsecondary educational programs based on the results of the PA Child Abuse Clearance.

We recommend meeting with our admissions counselors to review intended program expectations, recommended academic preparedness, program format, tuition, and financial aid information. Remedial coursework and/or tutoring may also be required to ensure a student's success in an intended program.

Specific programs may have additional admissions requirements. Please contact the Continuing Education Office for additional information.

Upon admission to the GACTC and the diploma program, a \$100 registration fee is required for all full-time programs, including the part-time Practical Nursing program. The registration fee is non-refundable. The GACTC reserves the right to deny admission and/or readmission to any student for an adult education program if, in the opinion of GACTC administration, his/her admission is not in the best interest of the student or GACTC.

### Readmission

Students who have withdrawn from the GACTC who are eligible for readmission may reapply to the GACTC after waiting one calendar year or with approval by the Continuing Education Coordinator to return sooner. Readmitted students may be enrolled on a probationary status if necessary as determined by the Continuing Education Coordinator. Terms of probationary status will be determined during the readmission process and reviewed with the student. This procedure applies only to students who were dismissed. It does not apply to voluntary withdrawals. Readmitted students will be charged the current tuition and fees.

### **Advanced Placement/Transfer Courses**

Appropriate transfer hours/courses may be granted for previous training completed by a student attending an accredited postsecondary institution recognized by the U.S. Department of Education. A student wishing to transfer coursework/credits/hours earned from another postsecondary institution must provide an official transcript from all institutions attended at the time of application. Additional information may be requested by the Continuing Education Office. It is the student's responsibility to obtain necessary documents and the student is responsible for any associated costs in obtaining these documents. Courses will be evaluated by the Continuing Education Coordinator and hours will be granted for courses similar in content and character. A "C" grade or better in each course transferred is required. At least 50% of the courses required for graduation must be completed with the GACTC. A course for which no credit or grade is given at the previous institution cannot be transferred. Developmental, review, or remedial courses will not be considered for transfer to the GACTC.

Transfer of credit may impact a student's tuition and financial aid plan. Please consult with the Financial Aid Officer to discuss the impact of transfer credit for tuition and financial aid plans.

## Section 3: Academic Policies and Procedures

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### Disability Services

It is the policy of the GACTC not to discriminate against a person with disabling or handicapping conditions in its education programs, services, and/or activities and to make reasonable accommodations to allow such individuals to participate fully in the programs, services, and activities offered.

No qualified applicant or student with a disability may be excluded from participation in or denied the benefits of any program, activity, or course on the basis of said disability. Academic standards and requirements that are essential to the program of instruction in which a student is enrolled will not be modified. Procedural and environmental adjustments, which do not substantially modify essential course requirements, will be made in accordance with the procedure set forth in this policy. The GACTC will also take reasonable steps to provide or permit auxiliary aids and/or services. Please contact the Continuing Education Office to discuss learning support needs and possible accommodations. Students will be required to provide documentation of learning support needs to the Continuing Education Office.

### Family Education Rights and Privacy Act

The Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974 grants postsecondary students certain rights related to their educational records. These rights, in summary, include the following:

1. *The right to inspect the student's educational records.* Students wishing to inspect their record(s) should make the request in writing to the Continuing Education Office. The written request to inspect the student's education record shall include the record(s) the student wishes to inspect. Arrangements will be made for access by the student to inspect the requested record(s) within 45 days after the day the Continuing Education Office receives the request for access.
2. *The right to request amendment of a student's educational record(s) that the student believes contains inaccurate information or information the student believes is in violation of the student's privacy rights under FERPA.* Requests for amendment of a student's educational record(s) should be submitted to the Continuing Education Office in writing from the student. The request should identify the information they want changed and the reason(s) for the requested change. The GACTC will inform the student of the decision in writing.
3. *The right to provide written consent before the school discloses personally identifiable information (PII) from the student's education record(s), except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.* The GACTC discloses education records without a student's prior written consent under the FERPA exception for disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A legitimate educational interest exists if the school official needs to review an educational record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibilities for the GACTC.
4. *The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the GACTC to comply with the requirement of FERPA.*

Students may request that the school not release directory information including student name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, program of study, dates of attendance, and enrollment status. Requests to withhold directory information should be made in writing to the Continuing Education Office within 2 weeks of the beginning of each course.

It is the policy of the GACTC in accordance with FERPA, to withhold personally identifiable information contained in our students' educational records unless the student has consented to disclosure to specific persons via the FERPA Consent to Release Student Information form. The FERPA Consent to Release Student Information form is available from the Continuing Education Office.

For full notice of students' rights under FERPA, please visit the U.S. Department of Education website at <https://studentprivacy.ed.gov/?src=fpc>.

## Program Schedules

- Expanded Function Dental Assistant: September 14, 2021 - June 3, 2022; Please refer to schedule from the Continuing Education Office as hours vary. Clinical hours will vary.
- Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning: August 30, 2021 - May 25, 2022, generally Monday through Thursday, 11:30 am to 6:00 pm
- Intergenerational: August 25, 2021 - May 31, 2022, generally Monday through Friday, 8:15 a.m. – 10:50 a.m. and 12:15 p.m. – 2:40 p.m.; view academic calendar at <https://www.gactc.edu/about/calendar/>
- Medical Assistant: September 20, 2021 - September 9, 2022, generally Monday through Thursday, 8:30 am to 4 pm. Please refer to the schedule from the Continuing Education Office as hours may vary. Clinical hours will vary.
- Medical Office Specialist: September 20, 2021 - June 16, 2022, generally Monday through Thursday, 8:30 am to 4 pm. Please refer to the schedule from the Continuing Education Office as hours may vary. Clinical hours will vary.
- Practical Nursing Full- & Part-time: Please reference the Practical Nursing Program Handbook.
- Welding: August 30, 2021 - May 26, 2022, generally Monday – Thursday 3:15 p.m. – 8:45 p.m.

Breaks are provided by instructors during scheduled class hours. Instructors determine the timing and frequency of breaks.

## Attendance Policy

Employers recognize that students who attend their training program with regularity will also be a more responsible and reliable employee. A student is expected to maintain regular and punctual attendance for class sessions and instructional off site experiences, including internships and clinical experiences if required for the program. Students are expected to attend all classes as scheduled as an academic obligation. Student grades are based on prompt completion of all assignments, presence for all examinations, as well as on the general quality of work. Program and course syllabi detail the grading procedures for each course.

Students are required to contact the Continuing Education or Practical Nursing Program office prior to the start of their scheduled program/class time if they are going to be absent, tardy for class, or if they need to leave class early. Certain matters may necessitate an individual not being in class. Students should make arrangements with the instructor to obtain missed work for an anticipated absence. Students should inform instructors in advance, if applicable, of dates when the student may need to be absent for a justified reason, late, or leave class early so that appropriate classwork may be assigned. All absences from class are marked as absences regardless of the reason.

Student attendance is recorded by the instructor on a daily basis in Infinite Campus or Canvas. It is a student's responsibility to monitor their attendance record in Infinite Campus or Canvas and report any discrepancies to the Instructor and Continuing Education and/or Practical Nursing Program offices within 5 business days of the incorrect absence. Attendance is monitored by the Continuing Education and Practical Nursing Program offices. Students receiving assistance from the Veterans Administration and other agencies may be required to submit weekly and/or monthly attendance records. Instructors have no inherent obligation to provide make-up opportunities for an absence unless, in their judgment, the reason for the absence warrants such consideration. Students reporting late for class will be considered tardy and recorded as a partial absence. Students leaving class early must have approval from the instructor prior to the start of the class session. Early departures may be considered as a partial absence.

Students are required to complete all missed work within the deadlines provided by the instructor. All coursework must be completed with the last meeting of the class, unless an Incomplete Grade has been awarded in advance of the last meeting of the class.

Students that exceed the maximum absences (see Satisfactory Academic Progress) must make-up missed assignments and time through coordination with the instructor. A student that exceeds the maximum number of allowable absent hours for their program of study may be terminated on the date on which the maximum absent hours was exceeded.

Some programs may require students to complete all program hours due to program accreditation requirements to be eligible for graduation and possibly offsite instructional experiences, such as clinical experiences.

Remote instruction is only available for students with extenuating circumstances, with approval of the Continuing Education and/or Practical Nursing Program Coordinator. Extenuating circumstances that prevent a student from attending class (e.g., medical emergency, etc.) will be evaluated by the Continuing Education and/or Practical Nursing Program Coordinator as it relates to fulfilling program requirements.

## **Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP)**

Students are responsible for meeting satisfactory academic progress toward completion of their program. Federal and state regulations require students receiving financial aid be enrolled in an eligible program for the purpose of obtaining an eligible credential, such as a diploma. Federal regulations require that in order to be making satisfactory progress towards a diploma, students must maintain specified grade averages as well as proceed through the course at a pace leading to completion in the specified time frame. Students receiving funds under any federal Title IV program must maintain satisfactory progress in order to continue eligibility for such funds. If a student's eligibility for financial aid has been negatively impacted by SAP, the student will be notified.

Satisfactory progress is defined as meeting the standards described below.

### **Evaluation Periods for SAP**

Students are evaluated on actual hours attended for SAP as follows:

- 900-hour programs:
  - Intergenerational, HVAC, and Welding diploma programs – evaluated at 450 hours and 900 hours
- Programs more than 900-hours:
  - EFDA diploma program - evaluated at 450, 900, 976 hours
  - Medical Office Specialist diploma program - evaluated at 540, 1,080 hours
  - Medical Assistant diploma program - evaluated at 450, 900, 1,140 hours
  - Practical Nursing (full- & part-time) diploma program - evaluated 450, 900, 1,232 hours

Satisfactory Academic Progress for transfer students will be evaluated at the midpoint of the scheduled hours or the established evaluation periods (see above), whichever comes first.

### **Calculation of SAP**

Students are evaluated on the following standards for attendance and grade point average (GPA) to determine Satisfactory Academic Progress:

- Intergenerational, HVAC, Welding, Expanded Function Dental Assistant (EFDA), Medical Assistant (MA), and Medical Office Specialist (MOS) Diploma Programs: Students must achieve and maintain a 75% cumulative grade point average and cannot miss more than 8% of the total program hours.
  - For a 900-hour program, students cannot miss more than 36 hours per evaluation period, as identified above, and a total of 72 hours for the duration of the entire program.
  - For the EFDA program, students cannot miss more than 28 hours per evaluation period, as identified above, and a total of 84 hours for the duration of the entire program.
  - For the MOS program, students cannot miss more than 43 hours per evaluation period, as identified above, and a total of 86 hours for the duration of the entire program.

- For the MA program, students cannot miss more than 36 hours per evaluation period, as identified above, and a total of 110 hours for the duration of the entire program.
- Practical Nursing (full- & part-time) Diploma Program: Students must earn a minimum of 75% of the final exam grade. Students cannot miss more than 21 hours per evaluation period, as identified above, and a total of 64 hours for the duration of the entire program (a requirement for graduation per the PA State Board of Nursing).

For all programs, missed time which exceeds the allowable absences must be made up within the evaluation period unless otherwise approved through an academic plan.

### **Determination of SAP Status**

Students meeting the minimum requirements for academics and attendance at the evaluation point (see above) are considered to be making satisfactory academic progress until the next scheduled evaluation. Students deemed not maintaining Satisfactory Academic Progress may have their financial aid interrupted. A student can still receive funding under certain SAP status, see details below.

### **Warning**

Students who fail to meet minimum requirements for attendance and/or academic progress are placed on warning and will continue to receive financial aid. The student will be advised in writing of the actions required to attain satisfactory academic progress by the next evaluation. If at the end of the warning period, the student has still not met both the attendance and/or academic requirements, he/she may be placed on probation.

### **Probation**

Students who fail to meet minimum requirements of attendance and/or academic progress after the warning period will be placed on probation. Students placed on probation must write an appeal to the Program Coordinator and the Financial Aid Officer, explaining why he/she was unable to attain SAP during the warning period and what they will do to attain SAP by the next evaluation period. See SAP Appeal Procedure below. If at the end of the probationary period, the student has still not met both the attendance and academic requirements required for satisfactory academic progress or by the academic plan, he/she will be determined as NOT making satisfactory academic progress and, if applicable, students will not be deemed eligible to receive Title IV funds.

### **Re-establishment of SAP**

Students may re-establish satisfactory academic progress and financial aid, as applicable, by meeting minimum attendance and academic requirements by the end of the warning or probationary period.

### **SAP Appeal Procedure**

If a student is determined to not be making satisfactory academic progress, the student may appeal the determination within ten calendar days. The student must submit a written appeal to the Program Coordinator and Financial Aid Officer describing why he/she failed to meet satisfactory academic progress standards, along with supporting documentation of the reasons why the determination should be reversed. This information should include what has changed about the student's situation that will allow them to achieve Satisfactory Academic Progress by the next evaluation point. Appeal documents will be reviewed, and a decision will be made and reported to the student within 30 calendar days. If the appeal is granted, the student will receive an academic plan, which will detail the steps and goals the student must meet before the next evaluation period, or otherwise determined by the Program Coordinator and the Financial Aid Officer. Under a granted appeal, the

student will be eligible to receive funding. Should a student's appeal not be granted the student will not be eligible for funding and will need to find an alternative way to pay for the payment period.

### **Interruptions to Enrollment and SAP**

If student enrollment is temporarily interrupted for a Leave of Absence (not to be extended beyond 30 calendar days), the student will return to the program in the same progress status held prior to the leave of absence. Missed hours while on a Leave of Absence will not be added towards the calculation of the student's satisfactory academic progress attendance portion.

### **Noncredit and Remedial Courses**

Noncredit and remedial courses do not apply to the GACTC. Therefore, these items have no effect on the student's satisfactory academic progress evaluation(s).

### **Transfer Courses**

Transfer courses are not included in the calculation of Satisfactory Academic Progress.

### **Maximum Time Frame for Program Completion**

Students are required to complete their program within a time frame of 150% of the program's assigned clock hours. For example, a 900-hour program must be completed within 1,350 clock hours or a student will lose eligibility for financial aid.

## **Tuition Policy (Full-time & part-time Practical Nursing programs)**

Tuition and fees are charged to students through a student's tuition account. Tuition rates are approved by the GACTC's Joint Operating Committee. Please review the following information regarding the tuition and fees for each diploma program for the 2021-2022 academic year:

- Expanded Function Dental Assistant diploma program
  - Program length: 1,053 hours
  - Tuition: \$15,755
  - Fees: \$2,985 (fees include Comprehensive Fee, laptop, textbooks, uniforms, tools, and other educational materials)
- HVAC with Related Plumbing & Electrical diploma program
  - Program length: 900 hours
  - Tuition: \$9,872
  - Fees: \$2,094 (fees include Comprehensive Fee, textbooks, uniforms, tools, and other educational materials)
- Intergenerational diploma programs
  - Program length: 900 hours
  - Tuition: \$7,292
  - Fees: Varies by program (fees include Comprehensive Fee and may include charges to textbooks, uniforms, and other educational materials)
- Medical Assistant diploma program
  - Program length: 1,380 hours
  - Tuition: \$12,854
  - Fees: \$3,205 (fees include Comprehensive Fee, laptop, textbooks, uniforms, tools, and other educational materials)
- Medical Office Specialist diploma program
  - Program length: 1,080 hours

- Tuition: \$10,027
- Fees: \$2,610 (fees include Comprehensive Fee, laptop, textbooks, uniforms, tools, and other educational materials)
- Practical Nursing Full-time diploma program
  - Program length: 1,564 hours
  - Tuition: \$14,713
  - Fees: \$3,660 (fees include Comprehensive Fee, laptop, textbooks, uniforms, tools, and other educational materials)
- Welding with Print Reading diploma program
  - Program length: 900 hours
  - Tuition: \$9,852
  - Fees: \$3,184 (fees include Comprehensive Fee, laptop, textbooks, uniforms, tools, and other educational materials)

Students may be responsible for other fees and educational resources not included in the tuition and fees.

A program of study consists of one (1) academic year divided into two payment periods. Each payment period is equal to 50% of the scheduled academic year. Exceptions include the Expanded Function Dental Assistant, Medical Assistant, and Practical Nursing programs which consist of a one (1) academic year and a prorated academic year for financial aid purposes. Students must have a financial aid/payment plan in place by the end of business on the seventh (7th) calendar of the start of the program. Tuition is required to be paid in full by the end of the program. Students choosing to utilize a payment plan must have a formal payment plan set up with the Financial Aid Officer. Students must follow the terms of the executed payment plan.

Financial aid is accepted for payment of tuition and fees upon receipt of such approval, all necessary financial aid paperwork must be provided to the financial aid office before the end of the add/drop period. If the student is being sponsored by an agency/employer, funding source, or special program, a letter must be sent to the Continuing Education Office verifying sponsorship or funding by the end of business on the last day of the add/drop period.

In order to continue to receive financial aid funds, students must earn Satisfactory Academic Progress, as detailed in the Satisfactory Academic Progress section.

A \$15 fee will be assessed for each bad check or other instrument presented by or on behalf of the student and accepted that is not negotiable. Payment of the fee and the amount due must be paid in full to continue participation in the program.

A student's tuition account must be satisfied and completed prior to the completion of his/her training program. The GACTC reserves the right to withhold services along with the diploma, transcript of grades or other records of achievement until a student's tuition account has been satisfied in full. All delinquent accounts are subject to the collection procedures established by the GACTC policy.

### **Add/Drop Policy**

An individual is considered a student once he/she has been accepted into the program and has paid the \$100 non refundable registration fee. Students may withdraw from a program without penalty or obligation at any time prior to 5:00 p.m. EST on the seventh calendar day after the official start date of the program. Students that withdraw after the drop period follow the withdrawal procedure.

### **Leave of Absence**

A leave of absence is a temporary interruption in a student's education at the GACTC. A leave of absence may be granted to students who need to interrupt their training for extenuating circumstances. A request for a leave of absence shall be

submitted in writing at least five (5) calendar days in advance, or in emergency situations as soon as possible after the first absence, or the absence(s) from class may be considered an unexcused absence. The request for leave of absence shall be submitted in writing to the Continuing Education Coordinator or Program Coordinator. A temporary leave of absence shall not exceed a period of 30 calendar days. Students shall not be granted more than two leaves during program enrollment.

## **Military Leave**

Students who must be absent for military orders requiring active duty, may be excused from classes if a copy of the orders is submitted to the Continuing Education or Practical Nursing Program Office. Military leave of absences are approved for the period noted on the military orders.

## **Withdraw Policy & Procedure**

A student may withdraw from the GACTC at any time. A withdrawal is a student's separation from the GACTC with no intent to return for the remainder of the current academic year. It is recommended students contemplating withdrawal from the GACTC discuss concerns with the Continuing Education Coordinator and/or Practical Nursing Program Coordinator and Financial Aid Officer.

Students who find it necessary to withdraw are required to complete an withdrawal form, available from the Continuing Education or Practical Nursing Program Offices. The withdrawal request will be reviewed by the Continuing Education or Practical Nursing Program Coordinator. The last date of attendance is used in calculation of applicable refunds or financial obligation to the GACTC. If a student withdraws or is terminated from a program, the last date of attendance is the last date a student has attended a class in the program. Students requesting a withdrawal will receive an estimate of owed tuition and fees or refund, as applicable, based on the last date of attendance.

A withdrawal is considered official once a completed withdrawal form has been processed. The withdrawal process includes the clearing of all financial obligations and an exit interview, if desired by the student.

## **Termination**

The GACTC reserves the right to terminate the enrollment of a student who does not meet academic, attendance, or conduct standards. Termination by the GACTC of a student's enrollment may occur for the following reasons:

- Failure to meet the standards for satisfactory academic progress.
- Failure to maintain regular class attendance. A student will be considered terminated/withdrawn from the program after a student has not attended classes for fourteen (14) consecutive calendar days, unless an exception has been granted by the Continuing Education Coordinator.
- Violations of the student conduct policy.
- Failure to abide by policies, procedures, and guidelines of the GACTC as a postsecondary student.

If a student is terminated by the GACTC, the last date of attendance will be the last date a student attended class. The last date of attendance is used to calculate any applicable refunds due to the student or a student's financial obligation to the GACTC.

A withdrawal during the first seven (7) calendar days of the program, student's books, supplies, and tools will need to be returned to GACTC, and tuition and fees (with the exception of the non refundable registration fee) one hundred percent (100%) will be refunded. If the withdrawal is after the first seven (7) calendar days of the program, refund will be based on the payment period for which the student is currently enrolled in. Student books, supplies and fees will not be refunded for the payment period that the student withdraws from. The chart below details how tuition charges will be calculated for the payment period in which the student was enrolled in.

Percentage of Payment Period	
Withdrawal after the start of the payment period but within 20% of the start of the payment period*	75% of tuition refunded
Withdrawal after 20% of the payment period but within 40% of the payment period	50% of tuition refunded
Withdrawal after 40% of the payment period but within 60% of the payment period	25% of tuition refunded
Withdrawal beyond 60% of the payment period	0% of tuition refunded

\*See Add/Drop Policy

All refunds will be made within thirty (30) days of withdrawal. Refunds of less than \$1.00 will not be refunded. If a refund is due to a student per the GACTC's refund policy and the student has received any Title IV aid as part of the student's aid package, the refund will be distributed in a specified order of priority. Refunds will be first made to the lender of a Title IV Loan to reduce the loan principal. Second, if applicable, the refund will be applied to reduce any Title IV grant amounts received. Third, if applicable, the refund will be made to the sponsoring agency, student or parent. All information on program costs and refund policies is made available to all applicants and is distributed prior to day one (1) of enrollment.

### ***Return of Title IV Funds***

The Financial Aid Office at GACTC, is required by the U.S. Department of Education to perform a Return of Title IV Funds calculation when a student ceases enrollment. This process is how the school will determine how much of the financial aid the student earned during the current payment period for which the student was enrolled. The calculation is based on the number of hours the student completed during the payment period divided by the scheduled hours in the payment period that the student was enrolled in at the time of withdrawal. If a student earned less federal aid than what was disbursed, GACTC is required to return the unearned portion of the federal funds. After the return of Title IV funds' calculation is completed, a student may owe a balance, at which time a student will be invoiced for the amount due.

Any federal funds considered unearned will be returned in the following order:

- Federal Direct Unsubsidized Loan
- Federal Direct Subsidized Loan
- Federal Direct Parent PLUS Loan
- Federal Pell Grant
- Iraq & Afghanistan Service Grant

If a student earned more federal aid than what was disbursed to his/her account, the institution would owe the student a post-withdrawal disbursement, which must be paid within 120 days of the student's withdrawal. The institution must return the amount of Title IV funds for which it is responsible no later than 30 days after the date of the determination of the date of the student's withdrawal.

Questions regarding financial aid should be directed to the Financial Aid Office at (814) 505-1257 or [financial.aid@gactc.edu](mailto:financial.aid@gactc.edu).

### **Grading**

Each course has measurement guidelines for assessment of a student's competence. How well a student demonstrates competence will be indicated on a student's report card and transcript by means of a letter grade. Grades are issued at the completion of an individual course or quarterly, depending on the program of study.

The grading system is measured against a standard norm which is designated to assess student progress, growth, acquired knowledge, and skill competence.

***Medical Assistant, Medical Office Specialist, HVAC, and Welding:***

A+ = 97-100(4.00)	A = 93-96(4.00)	A- = 90-92(3.67)
B+ = 87-89(3.33)	B = 83-86(3.00)	B- = 80-82(2.67)
C+ = 77-79(2.33)	C = 73-76(2.00)	C- = 70-72(1.67)
D+ = 67-69(1.33)	D = 63-66(1.00)	D- = 60-62(0.67)
F = 59 and below (0)		

***Expanded Function Dental Assistant and Intergenerational:***

A = 93-100	B = 86-92	C = 77-85
D = 70-76	F = 69 and below	

***Practical Nursing:***

Please reference the Practical Nursing Program Handbook.

## **Grade Requirements**

Some programs require specific grade requirements to participate in offsite learning experiences such as clinical internships. Specific program requirements are noted here:

- Expanded Function Dental Assistant students must maintain a "C" in all courses to participate in the required clinical hours and must earn a grade of "C" in all prerequisite courses to advance to the next course.
- Medical Assistant and Medical Office Specialist students must earn a grade of "C" or above in all courses to be eligible for participation in the required Externship course and to be eligible for graduation. Medical Assistant and Medical Office Specialist students must earn a grade of "C" in all prerequisite courses to advance to the next course.

## **Incomplete Grade**

A student who is unable to meet the course requirements within the scheduled time may request an "Incomplete" grade, identified as an "I" grade. An incomplete grade is a temporary grade that may be granted to a student who may have experienced circumstances beyond his or her control that prevents completion of course requirements by the end of the academic term.

To request an incomplete grade for a course, a student must submit in writing a request to the Continuing Education Coordinator prior to the last scheduled day of the course. The request is reviewed in consultation with the course instructor and a decision regarding the incomplete grade will be provided, in writing, by the Continuing Education Coordinator. The allowed extension/time limit for the incomplete grade and the associated conditions will be determined by the Continuing Education Coordinator in consultation with the course instructor. Once the conditions of the incomplete grade are satisfied by the indicated date, the course instructor will assign the appropriate grade in place of the incomplete grade. If the conditions of the incomplete grade are not met by the indicated date, the incomplete grade becomes a grade of "F".

## **Academic Integrity Standards**

The GACTC expects students to be honest and ethical in completion of the program requirements. Students are expected to complete program requirements with integrity. Academic dishonesty occurs when a student commits dishonest acts

within the student's academic work with the intent to deceive. Students' grades should reflect only their own efforts. The GACTC may impose sanctions on students that violate the academic integrity standards. The following are examples of dishonest and deceptive acts:

- Cheating including, but not limited to, use of unauthorized materials, devices, etc. during testing; providing or receiving unauthorized assistance in completion of assignments; having access to testing or assignment materials before a test or assignment is given, without consent from the instructor;
- Plagiarism including failing to give credit of the ideas, words, and/or data of another individual as one's own work;
- Lying, falsifying information;
- Using an information technology account of another student including accounts to access email, computers, and student information systems (such as Infinite Campus and Canvas)

The GACTC reserves the right to impose sanctions on any student that engages in the above acts and any other dishonest acts that violate the academic integrity standards. Sanctions may include lowered or failing grades on an assignment or course, suspension, or termination. Students are encouraged to report violations of the academic integrity standards to the instructor or Continuing Education Coordinator.

## **Grievance Procedure**

A student grievance exists when it is alleged that a student has been unfairly treated or has not been afforded due process. Adult students, and/or their representatives, have all the rights given to every citizen by the Fifth and Fourteenth Amendments to the U.S. Constitution. This procedure defines the due process procedure to be followed when filing a grievance.

*Step 1:* Within ten school days after the alleged violation, the grievant shall initiate an informal discussion with the teacher or person(s) who allegedly treated the student unfairly. If this informal discussion does not resolve the issue, the grievant shall initiate a discussion/conference with a counselor, or the supervisor in charge of student services or continuing education about resolving the complaint.

*Step 2:* If the grievance is not resolved under Step 1, the grievant shall submit the written complaint to the individual designated as Equal Rights and Opportunities Coordinator. The Coordinator has the authority to investigate the grievance and attempt a solution. If a solution is not achieved, then the Coordinator will set up a formal meeting with the Continuing Education. Also, at this time, the grievant's letter shall be passed on to the Supervisor of Secondary Education or Continuing Education, along with any back-up investigative information already collected. The Supervisor shall respond within ten working days.

*Step 3:* If the grievance is not resolved under Step 2, the grievant may request a formal meeting with the Executive Director. This request must take place within five school days from the Supervisor's response in Step 2.

*Step 4:* If the grievance is not resolved in Step 3, the grievant shall refer the complaint (written letter) to the Chairperson of the Operating Committee within ten calendar days. The Executive Director shall respond within 30 calendar days of receiving such correspondence.

**Note:** A grievant has the right to be accompanied by an additional individual during Steps 3 and 4. In cases where the grievance is not settled at the institutional level, contact the Council of Occupational Education, 41 Perimeter Center East, NE, Suite 640, Atlanta Georgia 30346, or telephone 1-800-917-2081 or 770-396-3898.

## **Graduation Requirements**

For a student to be eligible to receive the credential from the program of study and graduate from the GACTC, the student must meet the following criteria:

- Complete all program courses and achieve a 2.0 grade point average on a 4.0 scale overall or 70%.

- Students must not have missed more than 8% of the total program hours.
- The student has satisfied all financial obligations owed to the school.

Extenuating circumstances that prevent a student from attending class will be evaluated by the Continuing Education Coordinator as it relates to fulfilling program requirements. A determination may be made to waive the policy if justification is provided and all other academic and financial requirements are met. Please reference the Practical Nursing Program Handbook for graduation requirements.

### **Change of Student Information**

Students shall inform the Continuing Education Office of changes to a student's contact information, including mailing address, phone number, email address, name, etc. Please complete a Change of Student Information form, available from the Continuing Education and Practical Nursing Program Offices, to update this critical information, as needed.

### **Transcript**

To request official or unofficial transcripts from the Continuing Education or Practical Nursing Program Offices, please complete and return the Transcript Request form, available at [www.gactc.edu](http://www.gactc.edu), and from the Continuing Education or Practical Nursing Program Offices. Transcripts of a student's academic record may be sent to educational institutions, government agencies, and/or employers only upon the signed written request of the student or alumni. For an official transcript, which is signed by a school official and bears the school seal, a \$5 fee per transcript is required. Payment may be made via cash, check, money order, or debit/credit card.

Unofficial transcripts (those not signed by a school official and not bearing the school seal) are available to students at no cost. Transcripts, official or unofficial, will not be provided to students that have outstanding financial obligations to the GACTC.

## Section 4: Student Responsibilities

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We are appreciative of the trust you have placed in the GACTC to provide you with high-quality training to prepare for your chosen career. As a postsecondary student enrolled with the GACTC, we provide many services to support you, and we encourage you to embrace these keys for success:

- Come to class regularly and on time.
- Be willing to try and try again as you learn. Know that mistakes are part of learning! Accept that if you cannot do it now, you simply can't do it YET.
- Cooperate and collaborate with your instructors and fellow students.
- Look and act the part of the occupation.
- Be dependable and responsible.
- Appreciate and respect that your instructor is an expert in their field.
- Understand that you are part of a team and that teamwork is a component of your success.

### Student Conduct

Student behavior in the building and grounds is expected to be responsible in nature and modeled after any other professional situation. It is essential that the rights and welfare of all students are protected; therefore, interference with the orderly process of education or violation of standard rules of conduct set in place by the educational facility will not be tolerated.

Violation of any of the following rules and regulations by a participant will be cause for dismissal:

1. Possession or use of drugs and/or alcohol on school property.
2. Possession of firearms, or other weapons, on school property.
3. Any threatening actions or words with intent of bodily harm or harassment to students, school or program personnel.
4. Disrespect/defiance in conduct or words, including profanity, regarding school or program personnel.
5. Fighting or malicious conduct resulting in bodily harm to students, school personnel, program personnel, or damage to school property.
6. Vandalism on school property. In addition, students are responsible for payment of damages and may face criminal charges.
7. Theft of school property. In addition, students are responsible for return of items and may face criminal charges.
8. Refusal to complete assignments or achieve an acceptable minimum standard established by the instructor.

Violation of any of the following rules and regulations by any participant is cause for suspension:

1. Leave clinical or class without cause. Any enrollee shall be deemed to have left clinical or class if he or she walks out of class or abandons his/her position or refuses or fails to continue with assignments. The first offense will result in three (3) days suspension, the second offense may result in termination from the program.
2. Willful misconduct during their education. Willful misconduct is interpreted to be "an act in willful disregard of the educational agency's interest, or a deliberate violation of the rules of the individual educational agency."

Examples of willful misconduct include:

1. Students under suspicion of alcohol will be immediately drug tested.
2. Planning, initiating, participating in, or otherwise aiding or assisting in the conduct of any unlawful demonstration or civil disturbance.
3. Cheating on course examinations or assignments.
4. Serious offenses of gambling.
5. Smoking in and around the Greater Altoona Career & Technology Center is not permitted by students. A \$75.00 fine may be imposed on any person in violation of this policy.

The preceding list does not include every situation considered as willful misconduct. It is only a guideline of the type of actions often involved in termination from the courses. We reserve the right to dismiss any student who cannot benefit

from the education or who refuses to cooperate in any manner. (A failing grade, as noted on the report card, is cause for such dismissal.)

Disciplinary problems will be approached on a case-by-case basis. Each student's disciplinary problem shall be considered individually, with the disciplinary action based on the evaluation of all facts, including previous conduct, extenuating circumstances, and the severity of the offense. The appropriate disciplinary action shall be determined following consultation with the instructor and the Continuing Education Coordinator.

## **Dress/Appearance**

Postsecondary students follow the approved dress regulations as required for all students. Appropriate dress and grooming should reflect your preparation for a career within a specific trade area. Appropriate dress is expected in your intended profession, thus the way you dress reflects an image prospective employers expect.

This dress guide is prepared under the provisions of Act 46 of 1998 which authorizes schools to adopt dress or uniform policies. It is intended to help students best meet their vocational goals. Since every occupation carries with it certain modes of dress, habits of work and unique responsibilities, students are expected to look and act the part of the most successful worker in each occupational field.

The rationale is basically three-fold:

- **Safety:** Safety hazards, while varying from one program to another, are inherent in every vocational-technical program. The school board, administration, and instructional staff share responsibility for the safety of students. Therefore, required is a common mode of dress consistent with reasonable accident prevention measures for all students enrolled in the school.
- **Personal Hygiene:** Personal pride is best reflected in one's personal appearance. Cleanliness, neatness, and appropriate dress together do more to positively influence others in the workplace than most other personal traits.
- **Standards of Business and Industry:** The advisory committees for the respective school programs are on record in support of student attire appropriate for related occupations. Each of these advisory committees is composed of local trades' persons, supervisors, and other employers who know first-hand the traits, including dress and grooming, that are most desirable in entry level workers from the GACTC. In order to meet the predominant expectations of employers, the GACTC must listen to those in an official advisory role and gear each vocational program accordingly. A student's everyday school appearance should approximate appropriate dress for a job interview.
- **Daily Appearance:** Students must be in uniform. Students will not be permitted in the classroom or lab, if this rule is not strictly followed.

## **Student Photo Identification Cards**

All students are issued a photo identification card. The identification card must be carried by students at all times; the identification cards will be used for participation in GACTC-related activities and training, and should be shown to GACTC authorities and security personnel when requested, and relinquished upon request. The identification card is the property of the GACTC, however, students are accountable for the card. If the card is lost, stolen, or destroyed, students should report this information to the Continuing Education Office immediately so that a new card can be issued.

## **Lockers, Personal Items, & Searches**

Students are assigned a locker, unless a student declines a locker. Combination locks are loaned to each student to be used with the assigned locker. The GACTC administration has the right to inspect the locker at any time there is reasonable cause to suspect it contains materials which pose a threat to health, safety, and welfare of other students. This policy extends to backpacks, notebooks, handbags, etc.

## **Possession or Use of Tobacco**

In the interest of creating a healthy environment for our students, employees, and visitors, no smoking and/or use of smokeless tobacco will be permitted at any time in the school building, entrance ways, on the sidewalks, on the loading docks at either end of the building, or anywhere else on the surrounding premises of the school.

The no-smoking policy will be enforced in two stages:

*First Offense:* A letter of warning will be sent to the offender stating that he/she is in violation of school policy, in addition to a 3-day suspension for students.

*Additional Offenses:* The student may be suspended or terminated from the school, and/or a fine may be imposed.

## **A Drug-Free Workplace**

It is the policy of the Greater Altoona Career & Technology Center that the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession, or use of a controlled substance is prohibited on the property of the school and on non-school property used in the performance of school services.

Any student found in violation of this prohibition shall be subject to disciplinary action, including dismissal, and may be required to participate in a drug abuse assistance or drug rehabilitation program. As a condition of school enrollment, every student shall abide by the terms of this policy and notify the Continuing Education Coordinator of any criminal drug statute conviction. This Policy Statement is adopted in accordance with the requirements of federal law, the Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988.

The following acts by a student while in school buildings, on school property, at school-sponsored functions off school property, or in route to any of the foregoing shall be regarded as misconduct by such student provisions of Article XIII, Section 1318 of the Public School Code of 1949 as amended, also Act 26 of 1995 - Safe and Drug Free Schools:

1. The possession or use of narcotics or dangerous drugs, as defined in The Drug, Device, and Cosmetic Act (Act of September 26, 1961, P.L. 1664), and not prescribed by a physician or the possession or use of alcoholic beverages; or
2. Being under the influence of narcotics or dangerous drugs, as defined in The Drug, Device, and Cosmetic Act (Act of September 26, 1961, P.L. 1664), and not prescribed by a physician or being under the influence of alcoholic beverages.

Students should be aware that from time to time the Altoona Police Department will bring trained drug-sniffing dogs to sniff lockers for illegal drugs.

- Possession of drug paraphernalia and or alcoholic products is forbidden.
- School policy provides for drug testing of students in safety-sensitive areas.
- Every adult student must consent to drug testing at any time during the school year for one or more of the following reasons: cooperative education, reasonable suspicion, and/or random testing.
- Students must agree to cooperate in the drug testing procedures in order to remain enrolled at the GACTC.

Additional information on health hazards associated with drug and alcohol use or on drug and alcohol treatment services is available at the school.

## **Drug/Alcohol Testing Policy**

The school reserves the right to perform testing upon reasonable suspicion that a student is under the influence of drugs or alcohol. This testing may occur at any time during school hours, in school or during school sponsored functions, on or away from campus.

## **Dangerous Weapons or Substance**

Students are not permitted to possess or transport any object that could reasonably be considered a dangerous substance or a dangerous weapon on school premises at all times. This would include any school-sponsored activity on school premises or off school premises during the day or evening hours. Any student not adhering to this policy may face charges under the Pennsylvania criminal code as deemed necessary by school authorities.

This policy is in compliance with Act 26 of 1995 - The Act of March 10, 1949 (P.L. 30, No. 14), known as the Public School Code of 1949, amended July 1, 1981 (P.L. 200, No. 62), is amended to SECTION 1317.2 Possession of Weapons Prohibited - Amended 1995:

7029.1 Definitions:

- a. "Weapon" – the term shall include but not be limited to any knife, cutting instrument, cutting tool, nunchaku stick, brass or metal knuckles, firearm, shotgun, rifle, bb or pellet gun, look-alike gun, paintball gun, chemical agent, explosive device, and any other instrument or implement capable of inflicting serious bodily injury.
- b. "Possession" – a student is in possession of a weapon when the weapon is found on the person of the student; in the student's locker; under the student's control while the student is on school property, on property being used by the school, at any school function or activity, at any school event held away from the school; or while the student is on the way to or from the GACTC. School policy allows use of metal detection devices.

Authority

7029.3 The Joint Operating Committee prohibits possession of weapons and replicas of weapons in any school district building, on school property, at any school-sponsored activity, and in any public conveyance providing transportation to school or a school-sponsored activity.

7029.4 The Joint Operating Committee shall expel for a period of not less than one (1) year any student who violates this weapons policy. Such expulsion shall be given in conformance with formal due process proceedings required by law. The Executive Director may recommend discipline short of expulsion on a case-by-case basis.

## **Harassment Policy**

Statement of Policy

7030.1 It is the policy of the Greater Altoona Career & Technology Center to maintain a pleasant, safe, non-hostile learning environment for students which fosters the educational process.

7030.2 To ensure such an environment, the GACTC strictly prohibits verbal, physical, or graphic conduct by any student or non-student which harasses, disrupts, or interferes with an individual's performance or which creates an intimidating, offensive, or hostile environment. All students have a responsibility to conduct themselves in a manner consistent with this policy, thereby avoiding conduct that constitutes unlawful harassment.

7030.3 The GACTC will not tolerate any type of unlawful harassment of students by other students, employees, or non-employees (vendors, contractors, volunteers, etc.). Additionally, conduct that interferes with the learning environment or makes such an environment hostile, intimidating, or offensive will not be tolerated.

7030.4 Unlawful harassment is a form of discrimination prohibited by Titles VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, Title IX of the 1972 Education Amendments, Pennsylvania Human Relations Act, the Code of Conduct for Education, 22 PA Code § 235.11 and Student Rights and Responsibilities, 22 PA Code § 12.1, et. seq.

7030.5 Retaliation taken against students who bring unlawful harassment charges, or individuals who assist in investigating such charge or who provide witness statements in connections with such charges, is strictly prohibited.

Definitions

7030.7 A "student" refers to an individual registered part-time or full-time in any secondary or postsecondary or continuing education programs or courses sponsored by the GACTC.

7030.8 Unlawful harassment includes, but is not limited to slurs, jokes, or other verbal, graphic or physical conduct related to an individual's race, color, religion, ancestry, sex, national origin or disability.

## **Terroristic Threats**

A student shall at no time threaten to commit any crime of violence with the purpose to terrorize another or to cause evacuation of the building, place of assembly, or facility of transportation, or otherwise cause serious public inconvenience, or in a reckless disregard of the risk of causing such terror or inconvenience:

- On the school premises during and immediately before or after school hours.
- On the school premises at any time when the school is being used by a school-sponsored group, non-curricular related student group, and/or private non-school person(s) group.
- Off school premises involving violations or possible violations of the Pennsylvania Criminal Code, and/or when such conduct or conditions may directly, and/or immediately result in adverse effects on the educational process, when there is a reasonable need to preserve overall school discipline, when there is a reasonable need to preserve respect for teachers and other school employees, and/or when there is reasonableness in the effect including danger to the health, safety, welfare or morals of students within the school system.

Referral to Civil Authorities for charges under the Pennsylvania Criminal code shall be made when deemed necessary by school authorities.

## **Electronic Devices**

Personal electronic devices (cell phones, tablets, laptops, etc.) must be turned off while students are in class. Instructors will inform students when electronic devices may be used in class. If you receive an electronic device from the GACTC for your participation in learning activities associated with your program of study, the device should be used as prescribed by your program of study and within the terms of the GACTC's Acceptable Use Policy.

## **Safety Regulations**

You will be acquainted with the safety rules and regulations for each trade by your instructor. General safety rules follow:

- Do not operate machines unless instructed by the teacher.
- Obey warning and danger signs.
- Horseplay and practical jokes will not be tolerated in the shops or classroom.
- Don't take chances. If you are not sure what to do, ask your instructor.
- Safety devices that are found on a machine must be used. Wear your safety goggles, glasses and other safety apparel required by the instructor in the learning area.
- Clothing must fit properly. No extremes will be tolerated.
- It is suggested that all students have medical insurance to defray the cost of medical attention in the event of an accident. The GACTC will not be responsible for any student injuries or accidents.
- At no time should tools or other materials be left on the floor. Keep aisles clear at all times.
- Keep arrangement of tools in storage areas as originally planned and designed.
- At no time should you handle any project that does not belong to you.
- Never make any adjustments to tools or machines unless you are familiar with the procedures.
- Report all damaged tools and equipment to the instructor when damage occurs or when it is recognized.

**Eye Safety:** Eye safety consideration is important in the operation of a vocational-technical institution. With this in mind, the school has furnished every shop with eye protective equipment. For your own safety, you are required to use the proper protective eye equipment when performing such tasks as: welding, cutting, chipping, grinding, drilling, turning, milling, etc. Remember, a pair of glasses in your shirt pocket will not keep that fragment of flying metal out of your eye!

Instructors are asked to firmly enforce safety regulations at all times and with all students. In the interest of your personal safety and the safety of your classmates, you are not only asked, but required to obey all safety regulations at all times. An instructor who sees a safety violation committed in the shop or lab will immediately call it to the attention of the offender. The offender will be expected to comply with the instructor's request and make every effort not to repeat the violation. Students who commit repeated violations may be suspended or terminated.

In the event of an accident or injury, the student must complete an accident report form with the instructor to record the injury and the specifics which led up to the injury. The accident report for each occurrence must be completed and signed by both the instructor and the student. The report should then be provided to the Continuing Education Office.

## Section 5: Student Resources & Services

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### Financial Aid

The following information describes the types of financial aid available to students that qualify. Please contact the Financial aid office if you have any questions regarding your financial aid plan by calling 814-505-1257, email [financial.aid@gactc.com](mailto:financial.aid@gactc.com), or text 814-343-0047.

#### Applying for Financial aid

To complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) the student (and parent, if dependent) would need to set up a FSA-ID, this acts as the electronic signature when completing federal aid paperwork. The FSA ID can be completed at: [studentaid.gov/fsa-id](http://studentaid.gov/fsa-id)

Students may be eligible for grants and/or student loans, to determine that eligibility the student would need to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) online at [studentaid.gov/FAFSA](http://studentaid.gov/FAFSA). During FAFSA completion GACTC's federal school code needs to be added so the financial aid officer can evaluate the students eligibility.

The following programs have 1 Academic Year:

- Welding with Print Reading diploma program
- HVAC with Related Plumbing & Electrical diploma program
- Intergenerational diploma programs
- Medical Office Specialist diploma program

The following programs 2 Academic Years that are separated as:

- Medical Assistant 1380 hours
  - Academic Year 1: hours 0-900
  - Academic Year 2: hours 901-1380
- Expanded Function Dental Assistant 1053 hours
  - Academic Year 1: hours 0-900
  - Academic Year 2: hours 901-1053
- Practical Nursing 1564 hours (this is the same whether full time or part time)
  - Academic Year 1: hours 0-900
  - Academic Year 2: hours 901-1564

Please Note: Programs with more than 1 Academic Year will need a second FAFSA completed. The new FAFSA will be made available after October 1st of the year your program began.

#### Types of Financial Aid

- **Pell Grant**

Pell grants are awarded to students who demonstrate exceptional financial need as defined by the federal government. Grant amounts are determined by the student's Expected Family Contribution (EFC), which is indicated on the student's Student Aid Report. Some other eligibility requirements include:

- Having earned less than a Bachelor's degree
- Having graduated from high school or earned a GED
- Be enrolled in a program of study at least half-time
- Maintain satisfactory academic progress

- **Federal Direct Loans**

The following Direct Loans are made through the Federal Direct Loan program which is administered by the U.S. Department of Education (USDE). The lender is USDE and will be throughout the life of the loan. Direct loans have a fixed interest rate, standard 10 year repayment (unless otherwise chosen during the

exit counseling), and have an origination fee. Direct Subsidized and Unsubsidized loans are made to eligible students attending school at least half-time in a program of study and are maintaining satisfactory academic progress. Before the loan can be originated, the student must complete an Entrance Counseling and a Master Promissory Note available at [studentaid.gov](http://studentaid.gov).

- Direct Subsidized Loan: This loan is awarded on the basis of financial need. No interest is charged while a student is enrolled at least half-time.
- Direct Unsubsidized Loan: this loan is not based on financial need. Interest is charged during all periods, including while the student is in school and during grace, and deferment periods. The student may choose to defer interest payments while in school and the interest will be added to the unpaid principal amount of his/her loan. This is called capitalization and could substantially increase the total amount of repayment. Making interest payments while in school is recommended to avoid or minimize capitalization of interest.
- **Pennsylvania Targeted Industry Program (PA-Tip)**  
Each year GACTC will re-apply the programs for PA-Tip, based on the High Priority Job Listing published each year by Pennsylvania Department of Labor & Industry. After GACTC receives notification of which programs were approved the Financial Aid Officer will be in contact with the students in those programs to apply. This is a first come first serve basis with PHEAA therefore it is important to complete the application as soon as possible.
- **Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR)**  
Individuals who are physically, mentally, and/or emotionally impaired are encouraged to complete a pre-application with OVR at: <https://www.pacareerlink.pa.gov/jponline/>
- **Trade Adjustment Act (TAA/TRA)**  
Funding through the Trade Act is provided to dislocated workers who have lost factory employment due to foreign competition. This funding generally pays for tuition, fees, and required supplies. Normally, individuals are notified at their place of work or their point of contact.
- **Veterans (VA)**  
Most adult programs at the GACTC are state approved for VA educational benefits. The veteran or other eligible persons must be accepted in a program as an adult student. The veteran must apply for benefits through [va.gov](http://va.gov) on the G.I. Bill website. Upon approval, the veteran will receive proper notification from the Veterans Affairs Office. *NOTE: It is the veteran's responsibility to pay all tuition charges according to the regular schedule.*
- **Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act (WIOA)**  
Individuals who meet the Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act eligibility requirements are eligible to apply for funding for career training. Applications are accepted at the Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act Office (CareerLink) located in the county of residence. For more information, interested individuals should call their local WIOA/CareerLink office.

## Academic Support Services

The GACTC provides general career and educational counseling to assist students in achieving success in their training and education. Counseling regarding academic performance and tutorial assistance is available to all adult students. Tutoring may be provided on an individual basis and/or through group sessions. Students may request tutoring through their instructor or the Continuing Education office.

## Non-Academic Support Services

Students have access to in-house supportive services, such as assistance and referral to community resources from the Continuing Education office.

## Internships

Students in various programs have the option of participating in an internship experience in an occupational area compatible with the vocational-technical program in which the student is presently enrolled based on availability. An internship is an educational plan which integrates classroom experience and practical experience in the industry. It allows students to translate academic principles to action, refine career interests, and to develop skills and abilities associated with their educational training.

To apply, students must be in good academic standing, maintain regular attendance and have the recommendation of their instructor. Duration of internships vary. Please contact the Continuing Education Office to learn more.

### **Career Services**

The school, through its career services, makes every effort to assist graduates in locating job opportunities. The school does not guarantee employment. Students are referred for interviews based on requests received from employers and the recommendation of instructor(s). Students are urged to pursue employment opportunities provided. Those accepting employment after program completion are asked to notify the GACTC.

### **Computer Use and Internet Access**

The GACTC provides access to computers, a computer network, Wi-Fi, email address, and Internet access for adult students while onsite. Students must sign and abide by the Acceptable Use Policy to utilize these services. Students may use the computer lab in room 502 and 504, pending availability.

### **Articulation Agreements**

Students have the opportunity to articulate to an associate degree program through the partnership of the Greater Altoona Career and Technology Center and local colleges and universities, such as Mount Aloysius College, Pennsylvania Highlands Community College, and St. Francis University. Contact the Continuing Education or Practical Nursing Program Office for more details.