

**UNDERGRADUATE  
STUDENT HANDBOOK  
FOR  
NURSING MAJORS  
(Pre-licensure Tracks)**

*~ Effective Fall 2011 ~*

Supplemental  
to  
Western Carolina University  
*Student Handbook*  
and  
*The Record* (Undergraduate Catalog)

Updated **August 2011** by  
Undergraduate Student Affairs Committee

**All students in the nursing program are responsible for  
reading and understanding the information contained in this handbook.**

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# Welcome

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*Welcome or welcome back to the School of Nursing at Western Carolina University. Your educational experience will be challenging, rewarding, and exciting.*

*The faculty knows that you are committed to your studies. Your course work is just a small fraction of the knowledge you need to excel within your profession. It is up to you to go beyond that course work by immersing yourself in the professional literature, seeking new and challenging learning experiences, and involving yourself with student or professional organizations in the community.*

*This handbook contains important information about the nursing program at Western Carolina University. The School of Nursing policies and procedures are presented and are to be used in concert with University requirements, policies, and procedures. In addition, the handbook contains other useful information such as suggestions for coping with the stress of being in the program. Please review the handbook and retain it for future reference.*

*I am very glad that you selected WCU and its nursing programs. I wish you success in your studies. If you need to meet with me for any reason, please feel free to make an appointment.*

Judy Neubrandner, EdD, FNP-BC, CNE  
Interim Director, School of Nursing

## INTRODUCTION TO WESTERN CAROLINA UNIVERSITY AND THE NURSING PROGRAMS

### *Introduction to Western Carolina University*

Western Carolina University (WCU) is a comprehensive state-supported university comprised of the Graduate School and five undergraduate colleges: College of Health and Human Sciences (which includes the School of Nursing), Arts and Sciences, Business, Fine and Performing Arts, and Education and Allied Professions. Teaching and learning constitute the central mission of WCU. The commitment of the WCU community to service, research, and creative activities complements the central mission and extends the benefits of its scholarship to society.

The WCU general catalog, *The Record*, contains authoritative information concerning the University, student services, academic regulations, the University calendar, and degree requirements. *The Record* is published in both undergraduate and graduate versions. Students are to obtain a copy of *The Record* at their level and refer to it for guidance.

### *Introduction to the Baccalaureate Nursing Program*

The North Carolina Legislature, at the urging of Western Carolina University and the people of the western counties, established a baccalaureate program in nursing at WCU in 1969 and appropriated funds for its support. The baccalaureate nursing program is accredited by the National League for Nursing and the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education as well as approved by the North Carolina Board of Nursing.

The **Pre-licensure BSN** program leads to a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) degree. Upon graduation, Pre-licensure students sit for the National Council of State Boards of Nursing licensure examination for registered nurses (NCLEX-RN). The **Accelerated Entry Option** (AEO) enables candidates already holding a baccalaureate or higher degree to complete the requirements for the BSN program over a shorter time-span.

The **RN-to-BSN** program awards the BSN degree to persons with diplomas or associate degrees who currently hold a license to practice as a Registered Nurse. Cooperative transfer agreements between WCU and several western North Carolina community colleges facilitate the entry of registered nurse alumni from those community colleges into the RN-to-BSN track.

Theory classes are conducted in Cullowhee the junior year for Pre-licensure students and at Enka the senior year for Pre-licensure students. Classes for the Accelerated Entry Option are held at Enka. RN-to-BSN program coursework is conducted on-line (distance learning) with orientation sessions and other required meetings at Enka. For all programs, clinical nursing experiences are held at health care agencies throughout western North Carolina.

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## MISSION, PHILOSOPHY, AND CONCEPTUAL MODEL

### *Mission of the School of Nursing*

The School of Nursing (SON) adheres to and supports the mission of Western Carolina University. The School prepares professional nurses at the baccalaureate and graduate levels to address the health care needs of diverse populations in the region. In accordance with its teaching mission, the School provides a scholarly atmosphere that stimulates service, research, and creative activities by its faculty and students.

### *Philosophy of the School of Nursing*

The philosophy of the SON reflects beliefs and values of the faculty and gives direction to the baccalaureate curricula. Faculty believe their major responsibility is guiding the learning process to foster the holistic development of undergraduate and graduate students.

Faculty believe that the core concepts of the discipline are interactive and dynamic. These concepts are patient, environment, health, and nursing. The focus of nursing care is the patient, defined as an individual, family, group, community, or population. Patients have intrinsic worth and the right to self-determination in responding to their unique health care needs. Environment is the internal and external phenomena which are the context for the development, expression, and satisfaction of human needs. Health is not merely the absence of infirmity or disease but is a dynamic process of patient-environment interaction; health is defined individually and culturally. Nursing is an evolving practice discipline based on scholarship derived from theory, research, and experience. Nursing practice involves contextual awareness of the physical, emotional, sociocultural, and spiritual state of the patient. Faculty emphasize a holistic approach to caring in the human health experience across the life-span, exemplified by recognition of and appropriate interventions for human responses to actual or potential health concerns. This approach is facilitated by self-awareness, effective communication, and reflective, creative critical thinking.

Faculty and students are expected to demonstrate the spiritual and humanistic values of a caring profession. These include respect and concern for persons of diverse cultures and lifestyles, advocacy for social justice, and an ethic of public service. Within an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect, faculty and students exhibit integrity, honesty, and accountability for their own actions. Faculty encourages student participation in the processes of self-nurturance and life-long learning to promote and maintain professional growth.

The nursing curricula are developmental. Faculty believes that the study of liberal arts and sciences is foundational for nursing education. In addition to generating and utilizing its own unique body of knowledge, nursing synthesizes knowledge from other fields and disciplines. The baccalaureate graduate is a generalist who designs, provides, manages, and coordinates nursing care in a variety of health care settings. Master's education in nursing builds on this foundation and prepares nurses for specialist roles and doctoral education. The master's graduate is prepared for an expanded nursing role either as a nurse practitioner or a nurse educator. Graduates at both levels effectively engage patients in health education and collaborate with other disciplines in promoting, preserving, and restoring health across the life-span. Graduates are involved in scholarly inquiry and the application of nursing research. Graduates develop and enhance their roles in leadership of the profession and interdisciplinary management of health care while exhibiting autonomy appropriate to their level of practice.

### *WCU Nursing Conceptual Model*

The dynamic and interactive nature of the WCU Nursing mission, philosophy, and objectives are graphically depicted in the WCU Nursing Conceptual Model. Note the lines in the model are dotted. These lines represent the permeability through which all factors in the model influence and are influenced by the ENVIRONMENT. Environment is defined by faculty as “the internal and external phenomena which are the context for the development, expression, and satisfaction of human needs”

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The lines at the bottom of the model represent the entrance into the WCU system of prospective basic and RN-to-BSN (Capstone) students, with unique life experiences from diverse backgrounds. It is the belief of the faculty that Liberal Arts and Sciences are the foundation upon which nursing education is built. The three sides of the triangle that encloses the Liberal Arts and Sciences represent the functions of service, research, and creative activity which are nurtured by WCU, beginning in the freshmen and sophomore years and carried upward into the nursing program.

NURSING presents in the center of the model denoting that it is the central concept. The faculty believe nursing is an evolving practice discipline based on scholarship derived from theory, research, and experience. Nursing faculty emphasize a contextual and holistic approach to nursing and believe that self awareness, effective communication, and reflective critical thinking facilitate this approach. NURSING is positioned vertically representing the faculty's belief that nursing education is a developmental process moving from the simple to the complex. Thus BSN

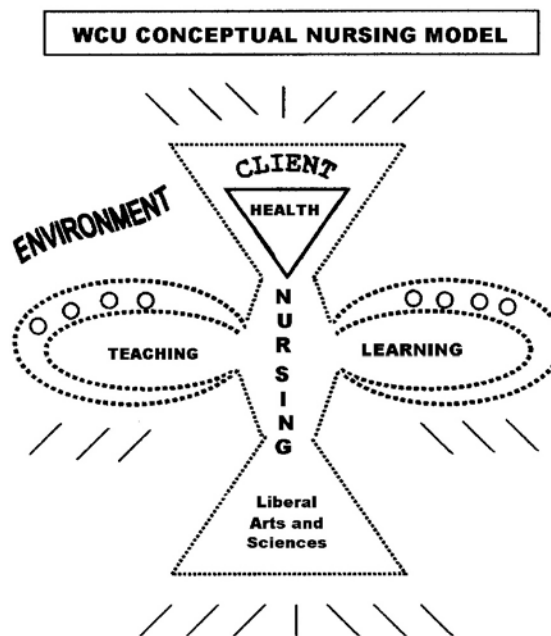
curriculum begins addressing wellness, moves upward to illness, and then on to complex illness. This upward progression of complexity continues as the MSN curriculum builds on the BSN preparation and develops nurses for advanced practice.

The double interconnected ellipses in the central plane of the model symbolize the infinite process of TEACHING and LEARNING. The outer line of the ellipses represents faculty while the inner line signifies students. The permeable boundaries not only represent environmental influence, but also interchangeability of teacher and learner roles. The lines beneath this elliptical plane represent the re-entrance into this process by Master's level students. The small circles within the boundaries of the inner and outer ellipses symbolize the concepts valued by faculty and woven through the nursing curriculum at all levels. Concepts include, but are not limited to: critical thinking, communications, holistic caring, appreciation for diversity, accountability/responsibility, theory/research/knowledge based practice, inter/intra disciplinary collaboration, health education, resource management, advocacy, leadership, political awareness/activism, ethical/legal practice, group process, nursing process, and career planning.

The dynamic TEACHING-LEARNING process is shown flowing beneath, creating, and supporting NURSING. The upward movement of the model into the upper inverted triangle denotes the focus of nursing which is the HEALTH of the patient. The faculty believe health is not merely the absence of infirmity or disease, but an individually and culturally defined dynamic process of patient-environment interaction. The holistic concept of health, which includes body, mind, and spirit, is represented in the three sides of the triangle surrounding HEALTH. Represented by the outer triangle is the concept of three levels of health care: primary, secondary, and tertiary. In addition, the illness-wellness continuum of health is represented. Illness is represented at the apex of the inverted triangle with health ever increasing, evolving outward and upward to the broad base. HEALTH is focused upward onto and supports PATIENT.

The faculty believe the PATIENT is the focus of nursing care and may be an individual, family, community, or population. Further, "Patients have intrinsic worth and the right to self-determination in responding to their unique health care needs." PATIENT is presented in a curvilinear fashion depicting the lifespan focus of patient healthcare.

The lines emerging from the top of the model represent the graduating nurses leaving the WCU Nursing learning community. They are ready to practice nursing at the level for which they have been prepared, addressing the health care needs of diverse populations in the region.



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## Student Learning Program Outcomes by Semester

### SEMESTER ONE

Communicating Outcome	Nursing Reasoning Outcome	Collaborating Outcome	Professional Valuing Outcome	Managing Information Outcome
...is the student able to apply principles of therapeutic communication with individuals? Is the student able to demonstrate beginning professional oral and written communication?	...is the student beginning to use elements and standards of reasoning within the nursing process?	...is the student able to collaborate in a goal-directed manner when performing nursing care and working with other healthcare providers?	...is the student able to recognize the need to incorporate professional nursing values?	...is the student able to access data and information from print, electronic, and other sources?
<p><b>Critical Elements:</b></p> <p>Utilizes criteria for therapeutic communication</p> <p>Demonstrates effective writing skills</p> <p>Employs effective oral skills in obtaining and presenting pertinent information</p> <p>Begins to use professional communication in interactions with members of the healthcare team</p> <p>Begins to develop therapeutic relationships with clients for the purpose of providing safe and effective nursing care</p> <p>Recognizes professional boundaries with patients, families, and other caregivers</p>	<p><b>Critical Elements:</b></p> <p>Identifies processes that facilitate safety and decrease errors in patient care</p> <p>Demonstrates self awareness by clarifying biases, inclinations, strengths, and limitations</p> <p>Recognizes the impact of attitudes, values, and personal bias on the care of the very young, frail elderly, and other vulnerable populations</p> <p>Identifies and begins to apply standards of critical thinking</p> <p>Assesses the health and healthcare needs of individuals</p> <p>Recognizes own limitations in nursing knowledge and skills and seeks help as needed</p> <p>Applies standards of professional practice in the delivery of safe patient care</p>	<p><b>Critical Elements:</b></p> <p>Recognize the physical, social and cultural influences affecting interactions</p> <p>Define appropriate process of delegation</p> <p>Identifies roles and behaviors of groups and group process</p> <p>Fosters positive, caring, &amp; respectful collaborative relationships</p> <p>Recognizes issues of power and conflict in relationships with patients, peers, and other healthcare providers</p> <p>Articulates various conflict resolution strategies</p>	<p><b>Critical Elements:</b></p> <p>Identifies the social significance and professional values of the nursing profession</p> <p>Demonstrates respect for human diversity in planning and performing nursing care</p> <p>Identifies own learning needs and ways to promote academic success</p> <p>Accepts responsibility for self-directed learning</p> <p>Demonstrates responsibility and accountability within defined role</p> <p>Demonstrates professionalism, including attention to appearance, demeanor, and respect for self and others</p> <p>Participates in professional activities</p>	<p><b>Critical Elements:</b></p> <p>Identifies reliable resources for data and information</p> <p>Uses technology to access data and information</p> <p>Uses clinical information systems (CIS) to document patient care</p> <p>Identifies ethical issues related to data security, confidentiality, and the patient's right to privacy</p> <p>Demonstrates proficient computer skills</p>

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## SEMESTER TWO

<b>Communicating Outcome</b>	<b>Nursing Reasoning Outcome</b>	<b>Collaborating Outcome</b>	<b>Professional Valuing Outcome</b>	<b>Managing Information Outcome</b>
...is the student able to apply therapeutic and professional communication effectively with individuals and groups?	...is the student able to use reasoning elements to make accurate patient care decisions?	...is the student able to work with others to listen, build on ideas, and contribute to mutually agreed-upon patient goals?	...is the student able to apply values of professional nursing?	...is the student able to utilize data and information through information management skills?
<p><b>Critical Elements:</b></p> <p>Utilizes appropriate communication techniques to obtain information for planning, implementing and evaluating safe nursing care</p> <p>Utilizes various modes of communication in professional nursing interactions</p> <p>Demonstrates appropriate documentation of nursing assessments, interventions, and evaluations in a timely and accurate manner</p> <p>Applies professional communication skills in interactions with members of the healthcare team</p>	<p><b>Critical Elements:</b></p> <p>Employs safe judgments based on context</p> <p>Analyzes own critical thinking using identified standards</p> <p>Identifies priorities and manages time to provide safe patient care</p> <p>Begins to incorporate evidence-based nursing practice in the delivery of care</p> <p>Actively seeks learning opportunities</p> <p>Explains the interrelationships among theory, practice, and research</p>	<p><b>Critical Elements:</b></p> <p>Participates in teamwork among peers and healthcare providers</p> <p>Demonstrates ability to provide and receive constructive feedback</p> <p>Demonstrates effective collaborative behavior with individuals and groups</p> <p>Recognizes and accepts appropriate delegation</p> <p>Recognizes conflicts and identifies ways to resolve conflict</p>	<p><b>Critical Elements:</b></p> <p>Demonstrates appreciation of human differences and adapts accordingly</p> <p>Incorporates respect and value of diversity in quality patient-centered care</p> <p>Identifies ethical dilemmas and applies principles/theories for ethical decision making</p> <p>Identifies political processes that enhance healthcare and the advancement of the profession</p> <p>Recognizes the importance of lifelong learning to professional practice</p> <p>Demonstrates accountability to the profession of nursing</p>	<p><b>Critical Elements:</b></p> <p>Obtains relevant data and information as a learner of professional nursing practice</p> <p>Inputs, organizes, annotates, and stores data and information</p> <p>Utilizes data and information to address professional issues</p> <p>Evaluates the credibility of sources of information, including data bases and the internet</p> <p>Explains the importance of evidence-based knowledge to ensure patient safety and improve patient outcomes</p>

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### SEMESTER THREE

<b>Communicating Outcome</b>	<b>Nursing Reasoning Outcome</b>	<b>Collaborating Outcome</b>	<b>Professional Valuing Outcome</b>	<b>Managing Information Outcome</b>
...is the student able to analyze communication of self and others?	...is the student able to continue towards independence in using reasoning to make accurate patient care decisions?	...is the student able to interact effectively based on the developmental level of individuals and groups?	...is the student able to consistently demonstrate ethically grounded behaviors reflective of professional nursing practice?	...is the student able to appraise the appropriate use of data and information for providing individual and aggregate care?
<p><b>Critical Elements:</b></p> <p>Analyzes application of therapeutic and professional communication skills in the delivery of safe patient care</p> <p>Compares and contrasts communication approaches based on interpretation of communication barriers</p> <p>Demonstrates insight into the relationship between effective communication and professional empowerment</p>	<p><b>Critical Elements:</b></p> <p>Analyzes own reasoning in multiple patient solutions</p> <p>Recommends and/or implements solutions that are logically developed, context specific, and theory based</p> <p>Identifies evidence-based practices to provide health teaching, counseling, screening, referral, and follow-up</p> <p>Uses clinical judgment to anticipate consequences of nursing interventions</p>	<p><b>Critical Elements:</b></p> <p>Collaborates as a member of the healthcare team</p> <p>Delegates and accepts appropriate tasks</p> <p>Uses collaboration to develop an intervention plan to support health and prevent illness among individuals, families, and communities</p> <p>Establishes empowered partnerships with individuals and groups</p>	<p><b>Critical Elements:</b></p> <p>Integrates professional role in relation to other healthcare providers</p> <p>Analyzes impact of sociopolitical issues on professional practice</p> <p>Applies nursing values in the context of clinical ethical dilemmas</p> <p>Analyzes the impact of healthcare disparities among diverse populations</p> <p>Explores role as a change agent in health care policy and practice</p>	<p><b>Critical Elements:</b></p> <p>Applies standards for managing data and information</p> <p>Accesses and selectively implements evidence-based information in planning professional nursing care</p> <p>Demonstrates competence in the use of CIS, communication devices, and patient care technology to provide safe and effective care</p> <p>Appraises the impact of telecommunication technology on healthcare communication</p> <p>Uses CIS to benchmark sensitive nursing outcomes</p>

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## SEMESTER FOUR

<b>Communicating Outcome</b>	<b>Nursing Reasoning Outcome</b>	<b>Collaborating Outcome</b>	<b>Professional Valuing Outcome</b>	<b>Managing Information Outcome</b>
...is the student able to integrate communication into professional nursing practice involving individuals, groups, and collective humanity?	...is the student able to use reasoning to make independent clinical judgments in nursing practice?	...is the student able to adopt an individual, evidence-based collaborative style as a professional nurse?	...is the student able to critique self in relation to professional role and ethics?	...is the student able to make clinical judgments through the management of technology and information systems?
<p><b>Critical Elements:</b></p> <p>Incorporates effective oral and written communication skills into own professional nursing practice</p> <p>Engages actively in goal-directed inter- and intraprofessional communication</p> <p>Utilizes effective oral and/or written communication skills to convey or receive performance evaluation</p>	<p><b>Critical Elements:</b></p> <p>Analyzes own reasoning in multiple contexts and considers the setting and patient population</p> <p>Makes judgments about the effectiveness of nursing interventions and the achievement of outcomes based on logic and intuition</p> <p>Incorporates effective management of human and physical resources into nursing practice</p> <p>Applies evidence-based practices to provide health teaching, counseling, screening, disease and outbreak investigation, referral, and follow-up</p> <p>Creates learning opportunities for self and others</p>	<p><b>Critical Elements:</b></p> <p>Develops creative strategies to enable systems to change</p> <p>Applies leadership concepts, skills, and decision making in the provision of high-quality patient care</p> <p>Demonstrates appropriate delegation</p> <p>Employs appropriate conflict resolution strategies</p> <p>Creates partnerships with patients and other healthcare professionals through collaboration for the purpose of delivering evidence-based, patient-centered care</p>	<p><b>Critical Elements:</b></p> <p>Analyzes ethical issues and takes appropriate action</p> <p>Incorporates cultural competence into clinical practice</p> <p>Synthesizes ethical, legal, and professional standards integral to the practice of professional nursing</p> <p>Develops a plan for life-long learning, professional engagement, and continued competence for nursing practice and career development</p>	<p><b>Critical Elements:</b></p> <p>Critically evaluates data and information</p> <p>Synthesizes data and information to improve patient outcomes and create a safe care environment</p> <p>Participates in the evaluation of information systems in the practice setting</p> <p>Uses Quality Improvement principles to enhance the delivery of healthcare</p>

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## PROGRESSION AND RETENTION POLICIES

The Undergraduate Student Handbook for Nursing Majors is available on the SON Web page and must be downloaded and read by the student. The student is responsible for following the SON policies as presented in this document.

As noted in the WCU Record, the SON reserves the right to modify school policies and procedures. Students must periodically consult their nursing faculty advisor to obtain current information. The SON will make every effort to notify currently enrolled majors of any changes. Changes and updates to student information will be posted on the SON web page. Students must keep the school informed of their current address, phone numbers, and email address.

A form acknowledging the student's receipt of the information in this Handbook is found at the end of this document. Another copy of this form will be provided for the student to sign; the signed copy will be placed in the student's academic file.

### ***Policy for Core Competencies Necessary for Students to Achieve Program Outcomes***

It is the policy of the SON and the College of Health and Human Sciences to adhere to the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Students admitted to the SON are expected to be able to complete curriculum requirements which include physical, cognitive, communication and behavioral core competences that are essential to the functions of the professional nurse. These core competencies are considered to be the minimum and essential necessary to protect the public. An applicant for any of the degree programs in Nursing must be competent in the following areas: observation, communication, motor, and intellectual-conceptual. An applicant must meet the competencies in spite of any handicap with or without reasonable accommodation.

Examples of competencies for each of the areas follow. Note that these descriptions are intended to be examples rather than all-inclusive.

- ***Observation:*** The applicant must be able to observe a patient accurately at a distance and close at hand. Observation relies on the functional use of vision and touch, enhanced by the sense of smell. .
- ***Communication:*** The applicant should be able to speak, hear, and to observe patients to obtain information, describe changes and perceive non-verbal communication. A candidate must be able to communicate effectively and sensitively with patients and peers. Communication includes speech, writing, and reading. The applicant must be able to communicate effectively and efficiently in oral and written form with patients, families, peers and other members of the health care team.
- ***Motor:*** An applicant should have sufficient motor function to obtain information from patients by palpation, auscultation, percussion, and other assessment techniques. The applicant should be able to execute motor movements reasonably required to perform general care and emergency treatment of patients such as (but not limited to) cardiopulmonary resuscitation, administration of intravenous medications, and manipulation of life support devices. These actions require coordination of both gross and fine motor muscular movements, equilibrium, functional use of the senses of touch and vision, and the ability to think critically.
- ***Intellectual-Conceptual, Integrative and Quantitative Abilities:*** The applicant must be able to demonstrate critical thinking and problem solving skills required of nurses. Essential intellectual abilities include measurement, calculation, reasoning, analysis and synthesis.

The SON makes every effort to provide reasonable accommodation for students with documented disabilities in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. To receive academic accommodations, students must contact Student Support Services at 137 Killian Annex (phone 227-7127). The letter received from this office, documenting required accommodations, should be presented to the professor as early in the semester as possible. Information regarding Student Support Services is available on the web at: <http://www.wcu.edu/12789.asp> .

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A student applying for admission to the nursing program is not required to disclose any disability prior to admission. After the student has been admitted, the student will receive a packet of information which will also include a statement to be signed by the student that the student is capable of meeting the core competencies. This statement will become part of the student's record.

### ***Full-time and Part-time Student Status***

Pre-licensure students are admitted to the upper-division nursing major on a full-time basis and should complete the program in four academic semesters (with summers as needed for electives). Nursing courses are sequenced; that is, in the Junior year, all First Semester courses must be successfully completed before enrolling in Second Semester courses; all Junior level courses must be completed before enrolling in Senior Level Courses. Pre-licensure students who need to consider part-time study should consult with their advisers. Students who take longer to graduate may find themselves penalized by the University of North Carolina's tuition surcharge policy.

In all clinical courses full-time students will receive preference when seats are limited. Clinical courses and their corresponding classroom courses must be taken together in the same semester (NSG 353/383, 357/387, 466/486, 468/488). Exceptions will be made for students called to active duty in the United States military services.

### ***RN-NCLEX Preparation/standardized Testing Program (ATI)***

Junior and Senior year students enrolled in the Basic (pre-licensure) BSN program are required to participate in a proprietary RN-NCLEX preparation/standardized testing program selected by faculty. The product in current usage is provided by Assessment Technologies Institute (ATI). Failure to participate in this program will result in failure to progress in the Nursing major. Proctored ATI assessment examinations are administered periodically throughout the Junior and Senior years. Acceptable performance on these exams, as defined by course syllabi, is required for progression in the nursing major.

### ***Documentation Required (Upon Admission to SON and Thereafter as Specified)***

All required documentation for students must be submitted by deadlines as defined in this section. All materials must be submitted prior to starting the student's first clinical course with the following submission deadlines: **August 1** for fall semester, **December 1** for spring semester, and **May 1** for summer session. For students admitted to the AEO track the deadline is specified in the letter of acceptance. Students must supply documentation covering the inclusive period of time in which they are enrolled in clinical courses, and must conform to the same due dates. **Failure of any student to conform to any documentation deadline will result in dismissal from the nursing program.**

***Student Health Form:*** All students in a clinical course must have on file with the SON a completed SON Health Form. The SON Health Form remains current for the time the student is enrolled in the program. The student must inform the level director of any changes in physical and emotional health which would interfere with providing safe care during the time the student is enrolled in the program.

***Proof of Completion of Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) Training:*** All students must submit current proof of the successful completion of a course in basic cardiac life support. Each student will provide a photocopy (front and back) of a card that documents successful completion. The American Heart Association Health Care Provider Life Support (BCLS) is preferred; if the American Red Cross program is chosen, it must include adult, child and infant CPR. Some cards expire in 12 months; others are in effect for 24 months. The School will abide by the expiration date specified on the card. It is the student's responsibility to maintain a current status.

***Professional Liability (Malpractice) Insurance:*** All students in a clinical course must annually submit a photocopy of their professional liability insurance policy, specifying the inclusive dates of insurance coverage and showing that the dollar amount of the policy is at least \$1 million per claim and \$3 million in the aggregate. Renewing the annual policy and resubmitting a photocopy are the student's responsibility. (Note: Liability insurance for Pre-licensure students usually does not cover any work outside of clinical course experiences. Employer-provided liability insurance coverage for RNs does *not* cover student experiences.)

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***Tuberculosis Testing:*** Results must be submitted annually and expire 12 months from the test date. If student learning activities take place at any clinical agency that requires more frequent TB testing, students assigned to that agency will be required to comply.

***OSHA Bloodborne Pathogens and HIPAA Training:*** OSHA Bloodborne Pathogens and HIPAA training are required annually and will be documented by the SON. Training will be provided as necessary at intervals based on program requirements for student cohorts.

### ***Immunizations and TB Screening***

There are specific North Carolina state requirements for immunizations of all college/university students. These differ based on age and other criteria. For those students who meet any of the following criteria, full immunization policies apply:

- on-campus residents, or
- taking on-campus courses, or
- taking a course load of more than four (4) credit hours, or
- taking day-time courses

It is the responsibility of the student to provide a Certificate of Immunization or record of immunization to the college/university. This must be presented on or before the date the student first registers for a quarter or semester. The above policy, and the immunization requirements below, may be found at:  
<http://www.immunizenc.org/college.htm>

Since students in all levels of SON programs will be performing clinical activities in clinical agencies, there are additional SON student health screening and educational requirements. These include an annual tuberculosis (TB) testing and varicella immunization series or proof of immunity by laboratory titer.

Students may not go to a clinical agency until all immunization requirements are up-to-date and do not expire prior to the end of the clinical rotation

***Varicella:*** Proof of vaccination (series of 2 at least 28 days apart), or a serum titer indicative of immunity, or medical verification of having had Chicken Pox (statement and signature of licensed physician, nurse practitioner, or physician assistant).

***Tuberculosis Testing:*** Results must be submitted annually and expire 12 months from the test date. If student learning activities take place at any clinical agency that requires more frequent TB testing, students assigned to that agency will be required to comply. Other Immunizations may be added as required by clinical facilities.

### ***Criminal Background Checks***

Beginning August 1, 2010, all nursing students must complete an approved criminal background check prior to beginning clinical activity. Student criminal background checks are required by many of the clinical agencies which partner with the School of Nursing. Students admitted to any School of Nursing program which includes a clinical site practicum must submit results of the background check prior to the first scheduled class day of the semester to which they have been admitted. Students are responsible for all fees and costs related to completion of the criminal background check.

Criminal background check results are submitted for review to the office of the Dean of the College of Health and Human Services. Positive findings will be reported to the Director of the School of Nursing and will be reviewed with the student. When required by the clinical agency, background check results may also be submitted directly to that agency for their review.

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Students assigned to a clinical practicum at the Charles George VA Medical Center, or any other Veterans Administration facility, will also be required to complete a criminal background check specific to the US Department of Veterans Affairs. The student is not assessed a fee for the VA background check.

In the event that a clinical agency denies placement to a student based on the result of a criminal background check, the student will not be eligible to complete the clinical course and will not progress in the program. Failure to complete a criminal background check in accordance with this policy, or failure to sign the School's consent form authorizing release of the report generated from the criminal background check, will result in failure to progress in the program or denial of enrollment in the program,

Any criminal conviction, including felony or misdemeanor convictions or convictions of major traffic infractions that occur subsequent to completion of the criminal background check must be communicated in writing to the Dean of the College of Health and Human Sciences within three (3) days after such conviction has been entered by the court, notwithstanding the pendency of any appeal. The Dean may direct the Director of the School of Nursing to report the conviction to clinical agencies in which the student is assigned, or will be assigned for a clinical practicum. In the event that a clinical agency denies placement to a student based on the conviction the student will not be eligible to complete the clinical course and will not progress in the program. The College of Health and Human Sciences Criminal Background Screening Policy for Students may be reviewed in [Appendix E](#).

### ***Academic and Clinical Competency Requirements***

The School of Nursing academic and clinical competency requirements assure that graduates of the program have demonstrated the knowledge and behavioral competencies required to provide safe and effective patient care. An undergraduate nursing major must pass with a grade of C (2.00) or better all required courses in sequence (as indicated in curriculum plans), and demonstrate professional and safe nursing practice. Students who fail to meet these retention standards will be dismissed from the upper-division nursing major. See Academic Standards in this document for the SON grading scales. Pre-licensure students should note that ND 338 is a required course in the nursing major.

Students are expected to maintain a running calculation of their status as exam and paper grades accumulate. Students who find themselves in danger of falling below the standards should consult with their academic advisors about their weaknesses and available resources. Students who find it necessary to withdraw from a course or from the University are responsible for following procedures in the *WCU Record* or run the risk of F grades on their transcripts. Any student who is dismissed has the option of appealing the decision (see Appeals) and/or of reapplying to the appropriate program.

Evaluation of student clinical performance is a cumulative process spanning all semesters of the program. The *Cumulative Clinical Evaluation Tool* is utilized to evaluate your attainment of the *Expected Outcomes* for clinical practica. This document is maintained in your student record and is accessible to faculty for review as you progress through the program.

Clinical performance is evaluated as satisfactory (S) or unsatisfactory (U). A satisfactory evaluation indicates that you have demonstrated attainment of minimal standards for each of the *Expected Outcomes* detailed on the evaluation tool. To support student success in the program, faculty may require a student to develop an Improvement Plan for identified unsatisfactory performance. The improvement plan is developed in consultation with the faculty instructor and is documented on the Improvement Plan for Unsatisfactory Clinical Performance. The improvement plan becomes a permanent part of the student record.

Accumulation of three improvement plans over the course of the program requires review of overall performance in the curriculum by the Undergraduate Student Affairs Committee (UGSAC). The review is conducted to determine if the pattern of unsatisfactory performance represents a failure to attain *Student Learning Program Outcomes* and may result in assignment of a final grade of Unsatisfactory (U) for the involved clinical practicum. Additionally, a single egregious and/or knowing violation of patient safety, confidentiality, or professionalism, may result in immediate review by the UGSAC and possible dismissal from the program. All reviews of individual student performance conducted by the UGSAC are documented in the student record.

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Evaluation of student performance using the standard Clinical Evaluation Tool (see course syllabus) is provided at mid and end-rotation/semester with suggestions for improvement. Students are expected to be familiar with these criteria and to seek clarification from faculty when needed. Student performance judged to be unsatisfactory during the experience by the clinical professor will be documented on the clinical evaluation tool; the professor will conduct a conference with the student and develop a plan for meeting the clinical criteria. The document will be signed by professor and student and copies will be given to the student, placed in the student's academic file, and given to the director of the SON. Unsatisfactory performance that is not corrected will result in a "U" in the course and failure to progress in the major.

### ***Health and Behavioral Problems***

The student who, in the opinion of the faculty, has a physical, emotional, or behavioral health problem that interferes with safe practice will be removed from learning experiences until the problem is resolved to the satisfaction of the School. A health problem is defined to include behavior that is injurious or potentially injurious to either the student, her/his patients, or other persons, or that results in conduct detrimental to a classroom, seminar, clinical, or laboratory experience.

Professional ethics and North Carolina law require a nurse to protect patients from unsafe practice. Thus, the nursing student is obligated to reveal to nursing faculty her/his own or others' questionable conduct that might interfere with safe practice. The faculty believes that most health problems are responsive to treatment and will not necessarily end a student's professional future when an evaluation and treatment program have been completed.

#### ***Removal from a learning experience***

If the problem behavior is detrimental to a classroom, seminar, clinical, or laboratory experience, the student will be removed from that learning experience. At such time a conference will be scheduled between the faculty and student as soon as practical to discuss the behavior problem and possible alternative experiences that will guarantee both safe practice and accomplishment of course objectives. A written record of this conference will be placed in the student's file, and the student will be given opportunity to make written comments of her/his own. The student may be required to obtain professional help for any health problem that is not temporary. The entire cost of such help shall be the student's responsibility. The student must give the person providing help permission to report to the SON that the student is receiving help.

#### ***Dismissal from the nursing major due to a health problem***

Dismissal from the nursing major due to a health problem may occur in the following situations

- If the conduct persists and the student does not get the required professional help.
- If the health problem is so long-term that missed experiences cannot reasonably be made up before the end of the session. The student may in this situation either withdraw from the course or negotiate for a grade of incomplete. The granting of an incomplete shall be solely at the discretion of the faculty.
- If the health problem is not responsive to treatment, or the student continues to demonstrate insufficient improvement in safe practice can be demonstrated by the student, she/he will be dismissed from the major and remain ineligible for readmission until safe practice can be demonstrated. Before the student is dismissed, a conference will be scheduled between the faculty and student to discuss the health problem. A written record of this conference will be placed in the student's file, and the student will be given opportunity to make written comments of her/his own.

#### ***Dismissal from the nursing major due to Improper Conduct***

The nursing faculty have academic, legal, and ethical responsibility to protect members of the public, students, and of the health care community from unsafe or unprofessional conduct. It is within this context that students can be academically sanctioned, disciplined, or dismissed from the nursing major.

Improper conduct is defined as:

- An act or behavior of the type that is prohibited by the *North Carolina Nursing Practice Act* or *Administrative Code* (Rules) (available online at [www.ncbon.org](http://www.ncbon.org)).
- An act or behavior that violates the American Nurses Association statement of ethical standards, the *Code of Ethics for Nurses* (available online at [www.nursingworld.org](http://www.nursingworld.org))

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An act or behavior that threatens, or has the potential to threaten, the physical, emotional, mental, or environmental safety of the patient, family member, another student, faculty member, other health care provider, or any member of the public.

- An act or behavior that constitutes a practice a student is not prepared, authorized, or permitted to perform.
- An act or behavior that is disruptive to the learning environment.

#### ***Investigation and Evaluation of Improper Conduct***

When an incident occurs that a faculty member judges to be improper conduct, he/she will notify the student and may instruct the student to immediately leave the setting. When an incident occurs, the SON handles the fact finding, the determination of the degree of seriousness of the student's conduct, and the referral to the next level of discipline, if any. If the student is dissatisfied with the outcome of the School's deliberation, he/she may appeal in accordance with the Academic Appeals Procedures.

**Any single safety or professionalism violation that is disruptive to the learning environment and/or results in actual or potential harm may warrant an immediate Unsatisfactory in the course at the discretion of the professor, and failure to progress in the major.**

#### ***Alcohol and Illegal Drug Testing Policy***

The School of Nursing enforces the Alcohol and Illegal Drug Testing Policy of the College of Health and Human Services. The policy provides for drug testing upon entry to the Nursing major, when required by clinical agencies, and when there is reasonable suspicion of drug and/or alcohol abuse on the part of a student. Students who exhibit chemically impaired behavior in the classroom or clinical setting, or who violate state or federal law governing alcohol and drugs, will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal from the Program. The policy may be reviewed in its entirety in Appendix D. In addition, all students enrolled in the School of Nursing must sign the Acknowledgement and Consent Form contained in the policy. The signed form attests to the student's acknowledgement of the provisions of the policy and the student's consent to undergo any drug and or alcohol testing required by the policy.

#### ***Composition-Condition (CC) and Oral Competence-Condition (OCC) Policy***

The SON conforms to WCU policies about CC and OCC marks. Refer to the current WCU Record (catalog).

#### ***Medical Terminology Competency***

The Curriculum Committee of the SON strongly recommends that all pre-licensure nursing students who have not taken a medical terminology course for credit work complete a medical terminology workbook prior to beginning nursing courses. Students will be responsible for all terminology in each nursing course.

#### ***Readmission***

Application for re-entry into the first semester of the program must be submitted during the regular admissions cycle. The student seeking readmission to the first semester is required to submit a new application packet. GPA will be calculated at the time of application for readmission. The decision to admit students applying for readmission to the first semester is based upon the applicants' ranked admission score in the overall applicant pool.

Students who have failed (earned a course grade less than C) for two or more nursing courses, are not eligible for readmission.

Students applying for re-entry into semesters two, three or four, are required to submit a written request for readmission to the chairperson of the School of Nursing Undergraduate Student Affairs Committee. Approval for re-admission to semesters two, three or four is granted by the committee, acting as the program Admissions Committee. The written request for readmission should include an analysis of why the student did not progress and a plan for success which addresses the identified reasons. The committee reserves the right to interview the student seeking readmission, as well as the right to require the student to comply with additional requirements or conditions as deemed appropriate.

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In addition, the committee must receive at least two letters of support from nursing faculty addressing the student's previous performance and potential for successful completion of the nursing curriculum, if readmitted.

The deadlines for receipt of written requests for readmission and faculty letters of support are October 15 for spring re-entry and March 15 for summer and fall re-entry. Approval of the application for readmission does not guarantee re-entry at the beginning of the next scheduled semester; re-entry is based on availability of a seat in the program.

Students currently enrolled in a WCU SON undergraduate degree program may not apply for admission to a parallel WCU SON program (example: a student may not apply to the Traditional BSN program while enrolled in the Accelerated BSN program).

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## ***NURSING (NSG) COURSE POLICIES***

### ***Transfer of Upper-Division Nursing Credits***

Any student seeking transfer of upper division nursing credit must provide a letter from the director of the School of Nursing where the credit was earned, verifying that the student is in good standing with that program. According to *The Record*, “the applicability of transferred credits toward degree requirements is determined by the Registrar’s Office and the SON Director of the student’s major. In some cases, due to accreditation standards, validation of a course by successful completion of more advanced work in the same discipline or by examination may be required.” The work must have been done at an institution “accredited by a nationally-recognized regional accrediting agency.” Nursing credits must also come from a program accredited by a national agency, either NLN-AC or CCNE.

*The Record* goes on to note that “there is no time limit on the course work accepted for undergraduate transfer credit. However, students who plan to schedule courses with stated prerequisites should consider auditing the prerequisite courses if no work has been attempted in the field within the past five years.” For the upper-division nursing major at WCU, no more than a year should have elapsed since the last clinical course, and we may require evidence that clinical skills have remained current through employment. The student must also go through the regular admissions process to the major and have met all of the prerequisites. There must be an available seat in the cohort the student is joining.

For faculty to evaluate the nature of transferred upper-division nursing courses, the student must submit course materials, including syllabus, learning packet, and any papers returned to the student. A grade of C or better must have been earned in each course. Nursing faculty who teach the comparable course at WCU will check these materials and make recommendations to the Director of the SON. The student may be required to enroll for one or more hours of Independent Study during the term the comparable course is taught at WCU in order to attend lecture, seminar, laboratory, or clinical experiences that may be missing in the transferred course.

### ***Credit by Examination***

Credit by examination is another option for students wishing to “place out” of upper-division nursing courses. The WCU policy set forth in *The Record* is adhered to by the SON. Students who want to try this option should contact the Professor of Record at least 30 days before the term starts to obtain course materials. The examination will be comprehensive, based on course objectives, and may contain both written and simulation components. Each examination attempted must be completed prior to the first class meeting in that course, so that if credit is not earned, the student may progress by taking the course as offered.

### ***Grading Standards***

*Grading Scale:* The SON uses a standard grading scale for all non-clinical BSN courses taught in the major: A+= 98-100, A = 93-97, A- = 91-92, B+ = 88-90, B = 85-87, B- = 83-84, C+ = 80-82, C = 77-79, C- = 75-76, D+ = 72-74, D = 69-71, D- = 67-68, F = 0-66. It is a SON practice to round up the final course grade when the first number to the right of the decimal point is a 5 or higher; e.g., 90.5 is an A-, but 90.49 is a B+. Clinical courses and independent study are graded Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory.

*A minimum passing grade on exams as defined by each course syllabus must be achieved for progression in the major.* Grading for elective nursing courses is at the discretion of each professor.

### ***Use of References for Papers***

The nursing faculty expects students to use references no older than 5 years. For variations to this policy, the student must consult the faculty. The standard reference manual for the SON is the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (see course syllabi for the required current edition).

### ***Penalties***

*Grade penalties* are outlined in the Attendance Policy and in the criteria for each paper. All papers have a due date and time. Work handed in after the deadline will lose a minimum of 5% for each calendar day (including weekends) that it is late.

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## ***Academic Integrity***

Honesty and integrity are fundamental values for the nursing profession and the University. Students will not lie, steal, or cheat in their academic endeavors, nor will the student tolerate the actions of those who do. It is the student's responsibility to be aware of the consequences of violating academic honesty policies and the impact such violations can have on their standing in the Nursing program, the University, and in their careers.

Nursing students are held to the Western Carolina University Academic Honesty Policy, published in *The Record* (Undergraduate Catalog), and also available on the web at [www.wcu.edu/studenthomepage/handbook](http://www.wcu.edu/studenthomepage/handbook). The universities' detailed Academic Integrity Policy may be reviewed in detail at <http://www.wcu.edu/26163.asp>.

To maintain the public's trust in nurses, dishonesty will not be tolerated. Professors have the right to determine the appropriate sanction or sanctions for academic dishonesty. Acts of academic dishonesty may result in penalties ranging from a grade of zero on the paper/project/test, or a "U" in a clinical course, to failure of the entire course and immediate dismissal from the program. Circumstances of the act of academic dishonesty and consequent sanctions will be documented in the student's academic file and reported to the SON Director in accordance with WCU policy.

*Examples of academic dishonesty:*

- **Cheating** - Using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise. This includes reproduction of any part of a web hosted examination (examples: saving, printing, "cut & pasting" or e-mailing), or unauthorized access of the examination.
- **Fabrication** - Creating and/or falsifying information or citation in any academic exercise.
- **Plagiarism** - Representing the words or ideas of someone else as one's own in any academic exercise.
- **Facilitation** - Helping or attempting to help someone to commit a violation of the Academic Integrity Policy in any academic exercise (e.g. allowing another to copy information during an examination)

Specific guidelines about avoiding plagiarism are available at: <http://www.wcu.edu/writingcenter/plagiarism.asp>

## ***Policy on Attendance***

Students are expected to attend **all scheduled learning activities**, such as orientation, lectures, seminars, labs, observations, clinical practica, evaluation, conferences etc. Refer to individual course syllabi for course specific attendance policies. No other activities are to be planned that conflict with learning activities. Students are responsible for resolving any conflicts that may arise. Students are responsible for their own transportation to and from clinical practice sites. Attendance means arriving on time and staying for the duration of all learning experiences. Students who fail to comply with attendance policies may be issued a failing or unsatisfactory grade for the involved course. Students are accountable for all course content and achievement of all learning objectives, so that all students receive comparable levels of instruction. Students who believe that an entire course is redundant for them should ask if they may get credit for the course by examination (see *WCU The Record*).

Students who do not complete assigned preparation for clinical have committed a safety violation; they may also be removed from the clinical site for the day at the discretion of the professor. See the section on Health Problems for removal from a clinical experience for a health problem.

Inclement weather plans are left to the judgment of the professor. A plan for weather related clinical closings will be discussed with each individual clinical rotation group with safety being the priority concern.

### ***Examinations***

Students are expected to write examinations on the scheduled dates. If a student is unable to write a scheduled exam, for whatever reason, she/he must notify the **professor** of the anticipated absence **the day of the exam**. Failure to notify the professor will result in a **grade of zero** for that exam. Patterns of missed exams will be evaluated individually by faculty in consultation with the SON Director.

The student must make arrangements to make-up the exam when she/he notifies the professor that the exam cannot be written as scheduled. Class time will not be used for make-up exams. At the discretion of the professor, the exam generally must be made up within two working days of the original scheduled exam time. Failure to make up the exam at the rescheduled time will result in the **grade of zero** for the exam. The format of the make-up exam is at the discretion of the faculty. The allocated time period for an exam will not be extended for a student who is late.

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### ***Tardiness***

Students are expected to attend all scheduled learning activities on time. Every effort should be made to notify the appropriate faculty member when unavoidable circumstances will cause lateness. Since late arrival is disruptive to a class/clinical setting, the faculty member has the option to exclude the student from the learning activity. Exclusion from class/clinical learning activity due to tardiness results in absence and will be treated as such.

### ***Absence***

When absence from a scheduled learning activity cannot be avoided, the student must notify the appropriate faculty member. **Notification of faculty prior to the absence is expected** but when that is not possible, notification should be carried out as soon after the absence as possible. Absences from any scheduled learning activity may delay the student's progress in the program. If any scheduled learning activities are missed, the student will need to make-up these learning activities or withdraw from the course. The decision regarding making up of learning activities or consequent withdrawal from the course will reside with the Professor of Record and the clinical professor. **All absences from assigned clinical experiences require a conference with the Clinical Professor to arrange for make-up assignment. The absence will be documented in the student file. A pattern of absences may result in a grade of Unsatisfactory for the course.**

### ***Professional Behaviors Policy***

Upon entry into the nursing major, you are beginning your socialization into the profession. Faculty expect students to behave in a professional manner at all times in class, clinical, and when interacting with patients, clinical agency personnel, faculty, peers, staff in the School of Nursing, and the public in general. Basic to professionalism is maintaining an attitude of RESPECT - towards others AND yourself. See [Appendix B](#) for the complete policy.

### ***Mandatory Orientation to Online Courses***

Participation with orientation to online courses is required. Students who miss the orientation to online courses without prior permission of the professor will be dropped from the course.

### ***Guidelines for Dress in the Clinical Setting***

In all instances students will dress and groom themselves in a manner that declares their affiliation with Western Carolina University and reflects pride in their status as professional nursing students. Overall appearance must be modest; cleavage and midriffs must not be visible. Hair, including facial hair, must be well groomed. Clinical faculty are the final arbiters for standards of grooming, dress, and personal appearance.

- **Identification:** Departmentally approved identification badges are to be worn whenever the student goes into any clinical agency in any variation of professional attire or when representing Western Carolina University in a student capacity. Students who change their names must obtain new identification badges.
- **Uniforms:** The standard uniform consists of Cherokee® uniform pants in the color eggplant (purple) and a white uniform top with the *Western Carolina University Nursing* arm patch securely sewn on the left sleeve. Students will wear the standard uniform for all patient care activities, unless directed otherwise by their clinical professor. Uniforms must be modest in that they do not reveal cleavage, midriffs, or undergarments; they must be clean and wrinkle-free. A white lab coat and the name pin are required for whenever the student will be in the clinical area without a uniform. In this case, clothing worn under the lab coat should be professional attire, such as khaki pants, or skirts, with nice shirt or blouse. No blue jeans or t-shirts are to be worn in the clinical setting.
- **Shoes:** Solid white, professional leather shoes must be worn with the hospital uniform. Athletic shoes are acceptable if they have all-leather uppers and are all white, including the soles. Clogs with solid white uppers are acceptable. Shoes with large holes on the top of the shoe are not acceptable. No open toed shoes, sandals or flip-flops are allowed in any clinical setting at any time, including orientation or tour days.
- **Hosiery:** White hose or all-white socks are required in hospital clinical settings.
- **Hair:** Hair must be off the face. Longer hair must be pulled back into a ponytail or bun.
- **Nails:** Artificial nails are not allowed; nails should be kept short and clean to prevent injury to patients and also for asepsis.

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- **Jewelry:** Students must adhere to the prevailing clinical facility policies regarding professional appearance and safety. The student must have a watch with either a second hand or a timer that is easy to read; watchbands should be simple rather than decorative bracelet-type. No visible necklaces or bracelets are allowed in the clinical setting. Rings are limited to one flat wedding band – rings with stones can easily damage patient skin as well as be an infection control risk. Students may wear one pair of non-dangling pierced earrings; other types of pierced jewelry (tongue, eyebrow, nose rings, etc.) are not allowed in the clinical setting. Neither the SON nor the clinical agency will be responsible for lost or damaged jewelry.
- **Gum:** Not allowed in any professional setting.
- **Tattoos:** Tattoos may not be visible in the clinical setting. If you have a tattoo on your forearm or upper neck, you must wear clothing that will cover the tattoo.
- **Community health experience:** Students wear an all-white top or shirt and navy blue slacks. A white lab coat or sweater may be worn. The SON arm patch and name pin must appear on the outermost layer of clothing. Neutral or navy hose or socks and dark, comfortable shoes complete the uniform.

**Exceptions to these guidelines will be made by the professor depending on clinical activities.**

### ***Placement of Students for Clinical Laboratory Assignments***

Placement for clinical nursing experience is influenced by a variety of factors such as consideration of students' learning needs, availability of appropriate assignments, and availability of faculty or preceptors. Placement for clinical experiences is the responsibility and prerogative of faculty.

### ***Transportation to and from Clinical Laboratory Assignments***

Students must provide their own transportation to and from the clinical areas. Some clinicals may start as early as 6:30 AM and others may end as late as 11:00 PM. Students will be informed in each clinical nursing course orientation of the hours of the clinical experience.

### ***Dosage Calculation Quiz***

Nursing clinical courses include medication dosing calculation examinations (Med Math Exams). Accurate calculation of medication dosages is a critical nursing skill and is essential for patient safety. All students must demonstrate mastery in calculation of medication dosages on these exams. Students are permitted a maximum of two attempts to achieve a passing score for each exam. (Minimum passing score is defined as mastery; see course syllabi for specific percentage correct requirements.) Failure to achieve a passing score by completion of the second attempt will result in grade of unsatisfactory for the course. Students will be notified in advance of the dates the exams will be administered,

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## APPEALS POLICIES FOR THE SCHOOL OF NURSING

### ***Academic Action Appeal Policy.***

A student has the right to appeal a final assigned grade or dismissal from a program level. A student may only appeal a final grade or program dismissal if he/she can show the grade or program dismissal was assigned ***arbitrarily or impermissibly***. A student who wishes to appeal a grade on a particular assignment or exam can do so if it affects their final assigned grade or dismissal from a program.

A final grade or program dismissal is deemed to have been assigned arbitrarily or impermissibly if, by a preponderance of the evidence, a student establishes that:

1. The final grade or dismissal was impermissible based in whole or in part upon the student's race, color, religion, national origin, age, sex, disability, sexual orientation, or for some other arbitrary or personal reason unrelated to the instructor's reasonable exercise of his or her professional academic judgment in the evaluation of the academic performance of the student; or
2. The final grade or program dismissal was assigned in a manner not consistent with the standards and procedures for evaluation established by the instructor, the program, or the University in the Catalog, in the course syllabus, or during the class/program in written or oral communications directed to the class/program as a whole; or
3. The final grade or program dismissal was the result of a clear and material mistake in calculating or recording grades or other evaluation.
4. Individual **elements** (e.g., assignments, tests, activities, projects) which contribute to a final grade are generally NOT subject to appeal or subsequent review during a final grade appeals procedure. However, individual elements may be appealed under these procedures providing **all** of the following conditions are met:
  - a) The student presents compelling evidence that one or more individual **elements** were graded on arbitrary or impermissible grounds;
  - b) Grounds can be established for determining a professionally sound grade for the appealed element(s); and
  - c) The ensuing grade for each appealed element would have resulted in a different course grade than that assigned by the faculty member.

If dismissal is a result of grades, the student may appeal the grade causing the dismissal. If the appeal is unsuccessful, the dismissal stands; the student cannot appeal the dismissal as well as the grade because dismissal is based upon the grades. If the appeal is successful, the dismissal will be rescinded.

If a student is appealing dismissal from a program, or a final assigned grade that results in dismissal, the student shall be allowed to continue taking courses until the appeal is resolved (with the approval of the program in which the classes are taken), with the exception of clinical placements or internships, or when the students' continued participation is deemed by the program director or department head to be harmful or disruptive to other students and/or the program.

If the appeal is unsuccessful and the dismissal stands, the student will be removed from any classes in which he or she is registered and will be responsible for any tuition and fees accrued as a result of registration during the appeals process. Instructions for filing an appeal may be found in [Appendix C](#).

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### ***Non-academic Appeal Policy***

A student has the right to appeal enforcement of the policies and requirements of the School of Nursing. The process to appeal a School of Nursing policy is as follows:

1. The appeal is submitted in writing to the Undergraduate Student Affairs Committee, through its chairperson. Students submitting an appeal are expected to clearly document in the letter of appeal the reason they were unable to adhere to the policy, and plans for correcting the situation. The committee may request to interview the student prior to making a decision. The committee will make every effort to adjudicate appeals in a timely manner.
2. A student may appeal the decision of the Undergraduate Student Affairs Committee, in writing, to the SON Associate Director of Undergraduate Programs within ten days of the decision. The student must specify reasons for disagreement with the committee's decision.
3. A student may appeal the decision of the SON Associate Director to the SON Director within five days of the decision. The student must specify reasons for disagreement with the Assistant Director's decision.
4. A student may appeal the decision of the SON Director, in writing, to the Dean of the College of Health and Human Sciences within five days of the Director's decision. The student must specify reasons for disagreement with the Director's decision.

### ***Conflict Resolution***

Faculty, recognizing that nurses, in the pursuit of patient advocacy and related professional issues must develop skill in conflict resolution and consensus building techniques, encourage students to attempt to resolve conflicts with faculty or student colleagues through open and honest communication. When necessary, student concerns, for students at any level, which fall outside of the provisions of the Appeals Procedure, as defined in the preceding section, may be addressed through the following process:

1. Unresolved student concerns may be presented as a formal complaint to the Undergraduate Student Affairs Committee. The complaint must be submitted in writing to a faculty or student member of the committee. The committee will discuss the complaint at their next scheduled meeting and will vote on a plan for resolution. The plan for resolution will be communicated in writing to the student who initiated the complaint.
2. In the event that the student feels the decision of the Student Affairs Committee fails to provide satisfactory resolution to the problem, they may request that the complaint be forwarded to the SON Director.
3. In the event that the student feels the decision of the SON Director fails to provide satisfactory resolution to the problem, they may request that the complaint be forwarded to the Dean of the college.

## **MATTERS PERTAINING to the NC BOARD of NURSING (Pre-licensure students)**

The North Carolina Board of Nursing adopted rules regarding unlicensed personnel (nurse aides) which became effective in 1989. The rules require those persons employed as Nurse Aide II to be listed on the Nurse Aide Central Registry, NC Board of Nursing. At this time, Nurse Aide I certification is still in the province of the NC Division of Facility Services, the office that takes care of nursing homes and other such agencies. However, Nurse Aide I Certification must be obtained before an application can be made for Nurse Aide II Certification.

### ***Nurse Aide I (NA I) Certification***

The NA I certification may be secured through an approved program prior to entering the nursing major. It is also available through the WCU School of Nursing after completion of portions of the nursing curriculum. Beginning Summer 2006 a standardized competency test administered by a vendor is required for listing on the Nurse Aide I registry. The vendor fee for the written and skills exam is \$92. More information regarding this change in NA I listing procedures will be reviewed with students during the fall semester.

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### ***Nurse Aide II (NA II) Certification***

To obtain the NA II listing, WCU nursing faculty have approved completion of

NSG 310, 311, 312, 313, 314, 320, 321, 322, 323 and ND 338 with grades of C (2.0) or better. Any grade of less than C (2.0) in these courses requires a written appeal to the SON Director for further consideration. Students meeting the NA II criteria may have their names placed on the Central Registry by completing the following before leaving campus for the summer:

1. Secure an Application for Listing as an NA II from the program Administrative Support Assistant.
2. Complete the application following the directions on the form.
3. Return your completed application to the Administrative Support Assistant along with a money order, cashier's check, or certified check. The NC Board of Nursing will not accept cash or personal checks.
4. At this time the Administrative Support Assistant will also need to see your NA I certificate and verification of high school graduation or GED.

Students planning to work over the summer as rising seniors in facilities that do not require the NA II listing (e.g., the Veteran's Administration Medical Center) might want to get the listing anyway, as it could be of use in another facility until the RN license is secured.

**When the Registrar has posted the spring grades** and if all above listed grades are a C (2.0) or better, the Administrative Support Assistant and SON Director will complete the school's portions of the application, and mail the original to the Board of Nursing. Students should allow three weeks for receipt of certification.

### ***National Council Licensure Examination for Registered Nurses (NCLEX-RN)***

Pre-licensure students are qualified, upon graduation, to sit for the NCLEX-RN in North Carolina or another state. Graduating seniors will receive application packets and instructions in their SON mailboxes. Please read the instructions and follow them carefully when completing the forms. Failure to follow the directions will result in the documents being returned and could even prevent writing the examination. More information about applying for and taking the NCLEX-RN is available on the Board of Nursing Web site ([www.ncbon.org](http://www.ncbon.org))

Early in the week following graduation, the SON Director will complete and submit the verification of applicant credentials form to the WCU Registrar's Office for completion and application of the University seal. The Registrar's Office works as quickly as possible to complete the nursing verification forms as well as verification forms for many other WCU graduates. However, please be advised that the forms will probably not reach the NC Board of Nursing for 7 to 12 days **after graduation**.

After the verification form reaches the Board of Nursing, 7 to 10 days are required to process the materials and issue examination information. For the verification forms, the SON Director will use the permanent address provided in the SON student file unless the student transmits to the SON Director, in writing, another permanent address by the date specified in the directions.

If a student requires the SON Director's assistance with completing an out-of-state NCLEX-RN application, the student **must make an appointment (via the Enka-based Administrative Support Assistant ) and inform the SON Director in writing** of the tasks to be completed. The student should secure an application from the state in which he/she desires licensure before this meeting. These forms can typically be obtained from the state board of nursing website.

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## CAMPUS LIFE

### *Introduction to WCU*

Due to the unique characteristics of the nursing program, faculty provide required orientation sessions at the beginning of each new academic year. Transfer students new to WCU are strongly encouraged also to attend orientation sessions arranged by the University. All students should familiarize themselves with the WCU Student Handbook and the behaviors expected of WCU students.

### **Mailboxes**

Each student who has been admitted to the professional sequence has an individual mailbox and email account. Junior student mailboxes are located near the SON's Cullowhee office. Senior and RN to BSN student mailboxes are located in the Student Lounge at the Enka campus. All School, College, and University announcements pertaining to nursing majors, as well as other campus and off-campus mail, will be distributed to you via your mailbox or class web sites. **If you do not use your campus e-mail, it is your responsibility to notify the SON of the address you use.**

### *Class Schedule*

Post online each semester, it contains important deadlines for pre-registration advisement, registration, filing an application for diploma/graduation, etc.

### **Office Hours**

Faculty schedules are posted individually. Office hours are indicated for walk-in conferences. Other times should be arranged by appointment.

## ADVISING and REGISTRATION

### *Advising*

The School Administrative Support Assistant will assign an advisor for each Pre-licensure student and notify the student of his or her academic advisor. Students are advised during their junior year by full-time faculty in the Cullowhee nursing offices. During the senior year, these students are advised by full-time faculty in the Enka nursing offices. Each student should make an appointment to see the advisor before registration and whenever assistance is needed. For most advisees, appointments should be scheduled during the 9-month academic year.

**Please note:** The ultimate responsibility for choosing classes, dropping classes, and meeting curriculum and graduation requirements belongs to the student, not the advisor.

*The student advisee is expected to:*

- Consult the *WCU Record* and the Schedule of Classes to become familiar with procedures and deadlines.
- Contact the assigned advisor to schedule an appointment, especially during early registration.
- Do preliminary planning and course selection prior to the advisor appointment; the later the registration date, the more options in courses and sections should be prepared.
- Fill out forms completely and accurately.
- Make final course selection and do course scheduling *after* having consulted with your advisor.
- Let your advisor know if major problems are expected or encountered (not just a section change).
- Keep your advisor informed about academic difficulties **AS THEY OCCUR**.
- Ask about changing advisors if the assigned advisor is not meeting your needs.

*The Academic Advisor is expected to:*

- Post and keep office hours, including expanded schedules for early registration.
- Help you find answers to questions regarding Liberal Studies and major requirements.
- Know about university resources and make referrals as needed.
- Authorize COMPLETED registration forms.
- Explain the grade point average, effect of repeats, probation status, and the readmission process.
- Maintain confidentiality.

- Consult to explore alternative courses of study when advisees are not achieving a record of academic success.

### **Registration**

Dates, materials, and instructions for pre-registration are published in the *WCU Record* and the Class Schedule that is available in late October and February. Web registration is now required. You may obtain your access number to register only by scheduling an advisement appointment with your advisor. Directions for Web registration are printed in the Schedule of Classes. Final grades may also be accessed by students through MyCat.

## **CAREER PLANNING**

**WCU's Career Services Center** offers a unique service by helping students (and alumni) identify employment opportunities, refine interviewing skills, and develop a professional file of reference letters and other documents for the Resume Referral Service. The Resume Referral Service is free and can be used indefinitely after graduation provided the file is kept current. To obtain instructions for developing a professional file, call the Career Services Center (828/227-7133) or check online with the Career services web page.

**Letters of reference** are ordinarily required for job applications. Although not obligated to do so, faculty are pleased to complete references on request. Students are asked to seek references only for serious employment considerations and/or to develop a file at the Career Services Center. References cannot be sent without the student's or graduate's written consent; the individual who wants a reference letter must first provide a signed consent for release of information, whether working with an individual faculty member or through the Career Services Center. Release forms for requesting references can be obtained from the Career Services Center or from the SON Administrative Support Assistant. Alumni should indicate their year of graduation and student ID number as well as any name changes to facilitate finding their files. It is a courtesy to request a faculty member to complete a reference before submitting that person's name, and to allow ample time for the request to be completed.

## **STUDENT INVOLVEMENT in ORGANIZATIONS**

Students are encouraged to take advantage of the opportunities to become involved in governance within the SON, College, and University. Organizations offer a wide variety of activities and learning experiences, as well as the opportunity to develop leadership skills and a peer network. You are encouraged to keep your academic schedule needs and student involvement responsibilities in balance.

### **Activities open to all**

#### ***Association of Nursing Students (ANS).***

ANS at Western Carolina University is a pre-professional organization patterned after its parent organization, the American Nurses Association. Pre-licensure students are strongly encouraged to join and participate at the local (WCU ANS), state (NCANS), and national levels (NANS). RN-to-BSN (Capstone) students are encouraged to be active members of the NCNA (the state organization of the American Nurses Association). The purpose of the association is to promote professionalism through leadership opportunities, professional contacts, networking, and applied community service learning. Both Basic and RN-to-BSN (Capstone) students are welcome at NCNA regional and state meetings.

The WCU ANS is open to all Pre-licensure, pre-nursing, and Capstone nursing majors. Yearly dues provide membership at the national, state, and local level. In addition to the membership benefits inherent in the association's purpose, members receive five issues of *Imprint*, the official magazine for nursing students; a state newsletter, and reduced rates for the semi-annual state conventions.

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### ***North Carolina Nurses Association (NCNA).***

NCNA is open to registered nurse students. Yearly dues provide membership at the national, state, and local level. In addition to membership benefits inherent in the association's purpose, members receive the Tar Heel Nurse, The American Nurse, The American Journal of Nursing, continuing education opportunities, involvement in community activities, and reduced rates for the annual state convention. Students are welcome at NCNA meetings.

### ***Nurses Christian Fellowship.***

Nurses Christian Fellowship provides an opportunity for nursing students, faculty, and staff to share spiritual concerns from a Christian perspective. The group is loosely organized, and each class can determine the meeting times and goals that would best meet the needs of the members. Membership is open to any interested nursing student, faculty, or administrator.

### ***Visiting Scholars, Professional Meetings, & University Events.***

When the SON is involved in extracurricular events, there will be opportunities for students to participate. Faculty will determine whether such events may constitute course requirements or extra credit. Regardless, students are encouraged to take advantage of these opportunities to participate in the professional or social life of the SON, College, and University.

### ***American Academy of Nurse Practitioners (AANP).***

AANP is open to any registered nurse currently enrolled in a program preparing nurse practitioners. Yearly dues provide membership at the local, state, and national level. In addition to the benefits inherent in the organization's mission, members receive the Journal of the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners, the Academy Update and other publications and position statements, web site and dedicated list serves for Academy interest groups and forums, extensive representation and lobbying in health policy arenas, continuing education opportunities, and reduced rates for national conferences and certification examinations for FNPs. The Academy also offers scholarships for students in nurse practitioner programs. More information is available at [www.AANP.org](http://www.AANP.org)

## ***Activities for Elected Representatives***

### ***Undergraduate Curriculum Committee.***

The Undergraduate Curriculum Committee is composed of undergraduate faculty and one Junior and one Senior pre-licensure student. In addition, one RN-to-BSN student may sit on the committee. Student representatives are elected by their peers at the beginning of the academic year. Students serve in an advisory capacity. This committee usually meets monthly during the academic year to evaluate and further develop policies and procedures related to curriculum, to ensure conformity and current-ness with present-day trends, and to provide leadership in developing the framework and design of the curriculum.

### ***Undergraduate Student Affairs Committee.***

The Undergraduate Student Affairs Committee is composed of at least four faculty members, with at least one from each BSN program, and one Junior and one Senior pre-licensure students. In addition, one RN-to-BSN student may sit on the committee. The student representatives are elected by their peers. Students serve in an advisory capacity. Duties of this committee include annually reviewing policies and procedures concerning admission to undergraduate nursing programs and making recommendations for modifications as needed. The committee will act on appeals from students regarding admission, retention, and promotion. The committee develops student related policies for the SON.

## ***Activities Open by Invitation Only***

### ***Eta Psi Chapter of Sigma Theta Tau, International Nursing Honor Society.***

The purposes of Sigma Theta Tau are to recognize superior achievement, recognize the development of leadership qualities, foster high professional standards, encourage creative work, and strengthen commitment to the ideals and purposes of the profession. The honor society is open to seniors, graduates, and community leaders by invitation. Students are eligible for nomination after completing at least half of their nursing courses. However, only the top 35% of the class is invited to membership; Basic and RN-to-BSN (Capstone) students are invited separately. More information is available at [www.nursingsociety.org](http://www.nursingsociety.org)

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***College of Health and Human Sciences Dean's Student Advisory Committee.***

This is a committee created to enhance students' ability to communicate with faculty and administration. It is open to students selected and is comprised of representatives from all programs. The committee meets once a semester with the Dean to discuss student issues and to plan College events.

***School of Nursing's Student Advisory Council (DNSAC).***

This is a committee created to enhance students' ability to communicate with nursing faculty and administration. A student is selected to represent each level and type of program in the SON. The representatives meet once a semester with the SON Director and invited faculty to discuss student issues and goals and to plan SON events. Don't hesitate to contact your representative at any time if you have an idea or a concern.

## **SCHOLARSHIPS, LOANS, and GRANTS**

Various financial sources, e.g., work study, grants, and loans, including the NC Nurse Scholarship Loan Program, are available to nursing students. To become eligible, application for financial assistance is made by contacting (1) the WCU Financial Aid Office in Room 230 of the Robinson Administration Building, telephone 828-227-7290. Financial aid recipients are expected to comply with the guidelines established by each specific granting or loaning agency.

### ***Scholarships***

Most scholarships are contingent upon funding from outside sources. Recipients are expected to comply with the guidelines established by each specific funding agency or private donor. Generally, a scholarship award pays, or contributes a portion of the cost of tuition and fees. In most cases, eligibility criteria are provided in the scholarship application guidelines: However, most scholarship awards stipulate that recipients must meet the nursing program progression requirements and maintain at least a 3.00 average to retain eligibility for scholarship assistance. The intent of most scholarship awards is to allow students to devote full-time attention to nursing study and thus, complete their program in the shortest time possible and to remain in the nursing profession or join the work force at the earliest possible date. The following provides information about some of the scholarships available to WCU nursing majors. Please contact the WCU Admissions Office for additional scholarship information and/or assistance.

### ***WCU***

To learn about scholarships available to all qualified WCU students, contact the WCU Admissions Office in Room 219 of the Robinson Administration Building, telephone 828-227-7317 .

### ***Health Care Agencies***

Several western North Carolina health care agencies provide scholarships and/or tuition reimbursement programs for their employees enrolled in nursing programs. Information about employer scholarships and/or tuition reimbursement is available usually from the personnel office of your employing health care agency.

### ***NC Nurse Scholars Program***

This program, funded by the North Carolina Legislature in 1989, awards individuals money for Bachelor of Science in Nursing education. The award may begin in the recipient's freshman year and is renewable for up to 4 years at \$5,000 a year. The program also awards rising juniors \$3,000 a year, renewable for 1 year, and awards RNs accepted to enter a BSN program up to \$3,000 a year. Eligibility criteria include a minimum of an overall B average, North Carolina residency, and (for Pre-licensure students) high SAT scores. Information is available from WCU's Financial Aid Office in January and from the NC Nurse Scholars Website at [www.CFNC.org](http://www.CFNC.org) or by telephone at 1-800-600-3453.

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### ***Andrea Culpepper Scholarship***

The award is given in memory of Andrea Culpepper, BSN Class of 1986. The scholarship fund was established through the generosity of Andrea's family and friends. The recipient must be a senior Basic nursing major, have at least a 3.00 GPA, provide two professional nursing references addressing his or her potential for successfully completing the senior year and practicing as a professional nurse, and demonstrate a financial need. An award of approximately \$400-\$500 is available to assist with the payment of tuition, book rental, or other required fees. Individuals meeting the criteria and desiring to be considered for the award should secure an application from the program Administrative Support Assistant .

### ***The Mary Kay Kneeder Award***

Mrs. Kneeder was the originator of the WCU SON. She and her late husband have designated this award, in the amount of approximately \$1,000 per academic year, generally divided between two Basic senior students. The Cullowhee Administrative Support Assistant can supply eligibility information and applications.

### ***Antonio Bonarrigo Scholarship Information***

Born in Salem, New Jersey in 1927, Antonio Bonarrigo served in the US Army during World War II. He was hospitalized several times afterwards because of his experiences during the war. He was a very reclusive person but kept his job and worked faithfully. After his father died he took care of his mother until she passed away. He was a hardworking man who was devoted to his family. He died in 2001 at the age of 73.

Alumnus Nicholas Bonarrigo, Class of 1950 in agreement with The Western Carolina University Foundation has established an endowed fund in memory of his brother, Antonio Bonarrigo, to provide scholarship support for deserving nursing students attending Western Carolina University.

Awards of approximately \$500 each are available to assist two full-time pre-licensure nursing students with the payment of tuition, book rental, or other required fees.

## **PREPARATION for GRADUATION**

### ***Scholastic Status Check*** (Source: *The Record*)

**"Each student is expected to know the information in the catalog and to verify that quantitative and qualitative requirements for a particular class rank and for proper progress toward graduation are being met. All students should check official records periodically to confirm their status. The university does not assume responsibility for the student's unexpected failure at the last minute to meet all requirements for graduation, whether failure is due to misunderstanding or negligence concerning those requirements or to an inability to meet them."**

### ***Filing Application for Diploma (Filing for Graduation)***

All students must submit a diploma application (application for graduation). by the dates provided by the senior advisors. The application process is completed online. *It is the student's responsibility to initiate and complete the application for diploma process. Students and advisors **collaborate** to fulfill this important task.*

Students are expected to confirm in person and/or in writing any anticipated changes to their academic transcript in the final semester of course work (including any elective credits, transfer credits, credit by examinations, and/or any credits not yet appearing on their official transcript/degree audit) with both their senior advisor and the Registrar's office to avoid any unexpected crisis in the weeks prior to graduation.

### ***School of Nursing Convocation***

A School of Nursing Convocation is planned near the time of the Spring commencement exercise by the Recognition Council with the SON to recognize students who have completed the Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) degree during the preceding academic year. It provides an opportunity for students to reflect upon their educational experience, celebrate their graduation, and recognize the contributions of others in helping them achieve their nursing educational goals.

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Responsibilities of all students/graduates include participating in decision-making as requested by the council, getting a picture taken for the class photograph, ordering class pins, graduation announcements etc. if desired, and responding promptly to all information distributed by the council, submitting payments due, and attending the Recognition Ceremony.

### ***Commencement***

Commencement is held at the end of the spring, summer, and fall semesters. Information concerning the graduation ceremonies, rehearsals, ordering caps and gowns, and so forth is mailed to students by the University. Watch your SON mailbox and/or email for specifics.

### ***Awards for Graduating Seniors***

The SON recognizes outstanding graduates through a variety of awards presented at the SON Recognition Ceremony, and at the College of Health and Human Sciences Awards. Nursing faculty nominate eligible graduates. Information may be solicited from the nominees to facilitate faculty voting on the recipients. Awards may be initiated or added to by alumni and friends of the SON ; contact the SON Director to make arrangements.

#### ***The Deitz Outstanding Student Award.***

These cash awards honoring Dr. Vivian Deitz, who was Head of the SON from 1988 through 1996, are presented to a Basic, RN-to-BSN (Capstone) and MSN graduate or alumna who have demonstrated outstanding qualities as a student.

#### ***Eta Psi Leadership Award.***

This cash award is given by Eta Psi Chapter of Sigma Theta Tau to a student member who has demonstrated leadership qualities.

#### ***Ethics Award.***

This cash award was funded by a graduate in honor of Dr. Barbara Cospers and Dr. Sharon Jacques and is given to a Basic student who has demonstrated high ethical standards.

#### ***ANS Award.***

The WCU ANS Chapter recognizes the ANS member who has made the most significant contributions to the organization for the academic year.

***Additional awards*** may be made available by various non-University sponsored agencies or organizations on a year-to-year basis.

## **ALUMNI**

To maintain up-to-date records of alumni, graduates are asked to keep the School and the University informed of current addresses and employment. Graduates are encouraged also to recruit qualified students into the SON and to support the School's current students and special projects.

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## Appendix A

### BLOOD-BORNE PATHOGENS

#### *Introduction*

On December 6, 1992, Federal OSHA promulgated a new occupational health standard intended to eliminate or reduce the health risks associated with exposure to the Hepatitis B Virus (HBV), Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), and other blood-borne pathogens that can be transmitted through exposure to blood and other potentially infectious materials. This federal rule was adopted verbatim in North Carolina by the Commissioner of Labor with an effective date of March 6, 1992.

The occupational health standard addresses employees who could come in contact with blood or body fluids as part of their work. Nursing students are addressed in the most current OSHA standard (Updated U.S. Public Health Service Guidelines for the Management of Occupational Exposures to HBV, HCV, and HIV and Recommendations for Post-exposure Prophylaxis, US School of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, June 29, 2001, Vol. 50, No. RR-11, p. 2) Furthermore, the School has always recognized that nursing students and faculty are at risk of exposure to human body fluids and thus, faculty teach and implement infection control procedures in on-campus laboratories and clinical agencies. The School's infection control, i.e., exposure control plan, is presented below and was adapted from the OSHA rule 29 CFR 1910.1030 Subpart Z.

#### *Exposure Control Plan*

*Standard precautions* will be observed with all human body fluids. According to the concept of standard precautions, all human body fluids are treated as if known to be infectious for Human Immunodeficiency Virus and Hepatitis B Virus and other blood-borne pathogens. The following guidelines are to be implemented in the on-campus nursing laboratory and in clinical settings. All faculty, staff, and students must attend an annual exposure control workshop. Additionally, each faculty member will review the following, as well as **specific agency guidelines**, at the beginning of each semester for on-campus laboratory experiences and at the beginning of each new clinical rotation.

1. Use nonsterile gloves when handling blood, body fluids, secretions or excretions. Disposable gloves must be replaced as soon as practical when contaminated. Utility gloves may be decontaminated for reuse if the integrity of the glove is not compromised. (See paragraph 4 in this section). Gloves will be changed after contact with each patient and before touching environmental surfaces.
2. Gowns or lab coats must be worn if soiling of clothes with blood or other body fluids is anticipated. Eye wear and a mask/face shields are necessary only when splatter of body fluids is possible.
3. Needles, syringes, and other sharp objects should be disposable and should be disposed of in rigid puncture-resistant, leak-proof containers. Further, needles should not be recapped, nor should they be removed from a disposable syringe, because needle stick injuries are most likely to happen during these activities. The use of needle cutting devices is not recommended for needles attached to disposable syringes but may be practical for vacutainer systems when disposable jackets are used or when intravenous sets are withdrawn. All needles shall be considered contaminated. Broken glassware which may be contaminated must not be picked up directly with the hands. Use a brush, dust pan, forceps, etc.
4. Instruments, work areas, and non-disposable items contaminated with blood or body fluids should be safely decontaminated with 1:10 dilution of 5.25% sodium hypochlorite (Clorox) and water or tuberculocidal disinfectants (e.g., osyl or septicol).
5. Reusable containers shall be handled with gloves.
6. There will be no eating, drinking, applying of lip balm, manipulation of contact lenses, or smoking in an on-campus laboratory or any potential exposure areas. There will be no storage of food in an on-campus laboratory or instructional/work areas or any potential exposure areas.
7. At present, commercially obtained laboratory reagents or controls derived from blood products should be treated as potentially contaminated specimens.
8. Infectious waste and items contaminated with body fluids (paper towels, sponges) shall be "red bagged" in leak proof containers which are labeled with the "Biohazard" symbol and autoclaved properly before discarding in the trash.
9. All students and faculty should wash their hands following the completion of on-campus laboratory activities, after removal of gloves and protective clothing, and before leaving the on-campus laboratory or

contaminated work area of the clinical agency. If hand washing facilities are not available, antiseptic hand cleansers are to be used. Hands are to be washed as soon as feasible.

10. In the event of an exposure to eyes, mouth, mucus membrane, non-intact skin or parenteral contact, the area contacted should be washed with soap and water immediately. A medical evaluation should be performed immediately and the WCU Safety Officer and the SON Director notified as soon as feasible by the faculty member for either student or faculty member exposure. See section on "Post-Exposure Evaluation and Follow Up."

11. In the on-campus laboratory, any laundry suspected of possible contamination shall be handled wearing gloves and placed in "Biohazard" marked orange or red bags immediately after use. It should be handled minimally and not separated in the work area. In a clinical agency, contaminated laundry shall be handled according to the specific agency policy.

### ***Post-exposure Evaluation and Follow-Up***

In the event of exposure to body fluids, the student and faculty member adhere to the following guidelines.

1. If the exposure occurs on campus, the faculty member will inform the student to seek immediately a medical evaluation from his or her physician/health care provider, the WCU or UNCA Health Services (i.e., Infirmary), the local health School, or an emergency treatment center. The faculty should remind the student to follow the procedures and/or recommendations of the individual(s) providing the medical evaluation. The student shall be responsible for any health care fees or charges associated with implementation of this policy. If the student refuses a medical evaluation, the faculty member will record this declination in the student's School record. The faculty member will also document the exposure incident in the student's School record.

2. If the exposure occurs in an off-campus location not owned or operated by the University and the exposure occurs while the student is completing a nursing course assignment, the faculty member will inform the student to seek immediately a medical evaluation at an emergency treatment center or from the student's physician/health care provider, the WCU or UNCA Health Services (i.e., Infirmary), or the local health School. The faculty should remind the student to follow the procedures and/or recommendations of the individual(s) providing the medical evaluation. The student shall be responsible for any health care fees or charges associated with implementation of this policy. If the student refuses a medical evaluation, the faculty member will record this declination in the student's School record. The faculty member will record likewise the exposure incident in the student's School record.

The student shall have the responsibility of following through with the protocol suggested by the individual(s) providing the medical evaluation. While the School cannot prescribe the protocol to be followed by a student, OSHA recommends that the following steps be taken by the individual(s) providing the post-exposure evaluation and follow-up:

1. Documentation of the route(s) of exposure, and the circumstances under which the exposure incident occurred.
2. Identification and documentation of the source individual, unless the School or the clinical agency can establish that identification is infeasible or prohibited by state or local law.
  - a. The source individual's blood shall be tested as soon as feasible and after consent is obtained in order to determine HBV and HIV infectivity. If consent is not obtained, the School or the clinical agency shall establish that legally required consent cannot be obtained.
  - b. When the source individual is already known to be infected with HBV or HIV, testing for either is not required.
  - c. Results of the source individual's testing shall be made available to the exposed student within 15 days of the completion of the evaluation, and the student shall be informed of applicable laws and regulations concerning disclosure of the identity and infectious status of the source individual.
3. Collection and testing of the exposed student's blood for HIV and HBV serologic status.
  - a. The exposed student's blood shall be collected as soon as feasible and tested after consent is obtained.
  - b. If the student consents to baseline blood collection, but does not give consent at that time for HIV serologic testing, the sample shall be preserved for at least 90 days. If, within 90 days of the exposure incident, the student elects to have the baseline sample tested, such testing shall be done as soon as feasible.
4. Post-exposure prophylaxis should be administered when medically indicated.
5. Counseling on the immediate and long term effects of potential infectious agents should be discussed

with the exposed individual.

6. The exposed student will be encouraged to report all related diseases and problems to his or her physician or health care provider for follow-up.

7. All information should be recorded by the evaluator and made available to the student. The student may be asked to provide documentation that he or she is complying with the recommended protocols.

1. Medical records should be maintained by the medical evaluator for 30 years following the completion of the evaluation.

### ***Preventive Education***

Each student is required to attend initial and ongoing instruction about the School's infection control, i.e., exposure control plan.

## **HEPATITIS B VIRUS (HBV)**

Viral Hepatitis B (also called serum hepatitis) is a severe liver disease of adults and children and accounts for about one-half of all hepatitis cases in the United States. It is spread between human beings by contaminated needles, by intimate contact with an infected person, and by blood transfusions. Health care professionals are at increased risk for acquiring Hepatitis B virus infection. Acute Hepatitis B is characterized by fever, loss of appetite, nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, enlargement of the liver, jaundice (yellow skin) and occasionally by rash and pain in the joints. About 10% of people do not recover from their infection but become carriers of the virus throughout their lifetime. This carrier state is associated closely with the development of cirrhosis of the liver, which can be fatal, and the development of liver cancer.

No specific treatment of Hepatitis B is available. However, there is one type of vaccine available. This is synthetic. The vaccine is generally well tolerated. No serious adverse reactions attributable to the vaccination have been reported for the vaccine. As with any vaccine, there is the possibility that broad use of the vaccine could reveal rare adverse reaction not observed in the clinical trials. Of the reported reactions, approximately half of them were injection site soreness. Low grade fever, less than 101 F, occurs occasionally and is usually confined to the 48 hour period following vaccination. Systemic complaints including malaise, fatigue, headache, nausea, dizziness, myalgia, and arthralgia are infrequent and have been limited to the first few days following vaccination.

Adult individuals should receive 3 doses of the vaccine intramuscularly. The second dose is given one month and the third dose is given six months after the first dose. The duration of the protective effect of the vaccine is unknown at present.

### ***Precautions***

The following precautions should be noted.

- Female personnel who are pregnant or who are nursing mothers should consult their health care providers, who must give written authorization prior to the vaccine being administered.
- Personnel who have any known cardiopulmonary compromise or who are dialysis patients or immunocompromised should consult their health care providers, who must give written consent prior to the vaccine being administered. Individuals who have well documented allergic reactions to formalin (formaldehyde) or thimerosal (mercury derivative) or yeast should receive special consultation from his or her health care service personnel prior to the administration of the vaccine.
- **ALTHOUGH THE VACCINE PROTECTS AGAINST HEPATITIS B, IT DOES NOT PROTECT ONE FROM OTHER INFECTIONS SUCH AS HEPATITIS A OR C WHICH CAN BE TRANSMITTED BY BLOOD AND OTHER BODY FLUIDS. FOR THIS REASON, TECHNIQUES FOR CAREFUL HANDLING OF THESE FLUIDS CANNOT BE RELAXED.**

### ***Availability of Vaccine for Nursing Students***

Students who work for a health care agency may have received the vaccinations as a condition of their employment. Other sources of the vaccine might be the student's local health School or personal health care provider. The student is responsible for the cost of the vaccinations.

### ***Hepatitis B Vaccination or Refusal***

All students admitted to the nursing major must provide either evidence of vaccination, plans to begin vaccination, or refusal to receive vaccination prior to beginning clinical nursing courses. See the immunization record in the Student Health Form and the nursing School's hepatitis immunization refusal form. These documents will be kept in the student's School file.

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## Appendix B

### Expected Classroom Behaviors Testing Policy Expected Respectful and Professional Behaviors

Upon entry into the nursing major, you are beginning your socialization into the profession. Faculty expect students to behave in a professional manner at all times in class, clinical, and when interacting with patients, clinical agency personnel, faculty, peers, staff in the School of Nursing (SON), and the public in general. Basic to professionalism is maintaining an attitude of *respect* - towards others *and* yourself.

#### Expected classroom behaviors:

1. **Investment:** Your outcome in each course and the nursing program overall is based on what you invest. You are expected to come to class prepared, having done the assigned reading and completing assignments as posted.
2. **Integrity:** Academic integrity is fundamental and expected of all nursing students; see the handbook for student nurses.
3. **Attendance:** Prompt attendance at all learning activities is expected of all students. Arriving late to class is disruptive to other students as well as disrespectful to faculty and peers. Please arrive on time to class and remain in class until it is over. If an emergency causes you to arrive late, sit in the back of the room and speak with the professor about the reason for the tardiness after class. Unannounced quizzes can be expected in any class at any time. There will be no make up of unannounced quizzes.
4. **Class breaks:** Professors will schedule breaks as appropriate. Please plan bathroom visits and snack times for breaks. Return from breaks promptly.
5. **Talking:** Talking to other students (side conversations) in class causes *at least 2* people to miss what is being presented or discussed. Students may be asked to leave the classroom if this behavior occurs. If you have a question or comment, raise your hand and wait to be called on.
6. **Seating:** Seats may be assigned by the professor, and if a pattern of socialization is disruptive, students can be asked to move their seats, or leave the classroom.
7. **Sleeping in class:** Students cannot learn if they are sleeping and it is a tremendous distraction to other students who watch them nod off.
8. **Cell Phones:** Cell phone, beepers, and pagers must be turned off and placed out of sight during class. Texting or talking on cell phones during class is prohibited. You will not be permitted to use the calculator on your cell phones during exams.
9. **Guests:** No children, friends, or guests are allowed in the classroom. Only registered WCU students may attend class.
10. **Taping:** Taping or recording of class is allowed with the permission of the professor.
11. **Class web sites:** You should check class websites daily. This is our primary avenue of communication with students and will have information about assignments, and what items you are to bring to class. Additionally, if a class must be cancelled or postponed, it will be posted on the class website. Please be aware that student activity on class web sites can be tracked.

12. **Computers:** Laptops may be used in the classroom for taking notes. Games, emailing, web surfing, etc are prohibited.
13. **Our Responsibility:** Faculty take seriously the responsibility we bear for maintaining a learning environment for *all* students. If you disturb others or do not adhere to the required behaviors, faculty will dismiss you from class.

Testing policy:

1. During testing, no personal items are allowed on the desk or table. This includes backpacks, notebooks, food and drink items, cell phones, and jackets. Ball caps or other hats with bills are *not* allowed during exams. If a student removes a layer of clothing, it is to be placed on the back of the chair, not in the student's lap. Faculty reserve the right to require students to place personal items in a designated place in the classroom.
2. Once a student has completed the exam, he/she is to exit the classroom; students should wait away from the classroom door so as not to disturb those who are still testing. Items may not be retrieved until all students have finished the exam.
3. Students are allowed to use earplugs during testing; however, they are responsible for any announcements made, including those pertaining to allotted time left or test item clarification. Faculty reserve the right to inspect earplugs.
4. The WCU SON makes every effort to give timely feedback on all exams, and we schedule exam reviews as soon as is possible following each exam to review correct answers. Exam reviews are a valuable part of the learning process. Exam reviews are designed as a time to review each question and the correct answer, and are not used as a time to challenge questions. Students not attending the test review will not be allowed to review the test at a later time, except under extenuating circumstances and previously arranged with the professor of record.
5. If you have questions about a particular test item or would like clarification, you should schedule an appointment with the involved faculty and submit your question in writing, with a documented source from either lecture or the assigned textbook. This needs to be done within 7 days of the exam review.
6. WCU SON conducts statistical analyses on all exams. Based on those analyses, and in consultation with other faculty, items are examined for accuracy, reliability, and fairness. Occasionally items may be eliminated based on statistical data and faculty expertise. Exam grades will not be posted until those analyses are completed and faculty have had ample time to examine those results.
7. You must notify faculty (the course professor of record, specifically) *prior* to missing a quiz or exam for it to be excused (with the exception of emergencies, in which case notification should be made as soon as is feasible). You should call the professor of record's office phone (number is posted in syllabus) and leave a message if he/she is not in the office. Excused absences may include illness (a note from a health care provider may be required) or death of a family member.

8. Make-ups for quizzes and exams in the SON are allowed for excused absences only. Make ups must be scheduled within one week of the missed exam/quiz with the professor of record. It is the student's responsibility to contact the involved faculty and schedule the makeup. Make up exams may be in an alternate format from the original exam.
9. Any pattern of absences from exams will be addressed by faculty and documented.

Expected respectful and professional behaviors:

1. Faculty should be addressed by their appropriate titles, e.g. "Professor" or "Dr.," rather than by their first names.
2. Knock on doors before entering offices and ask permission to enter. Even if the door is open, faculty are often occupied or having private conversations with students or other faculty.
3. Do not enter faculty offices when the faculty is not present, or without permission.
4. Students should not be in faculty offices during class time.
5. If you have a question or complaint about an issue, you should respectfully approach the person involved, whether it be faculty, staff, or a peer. If you have questions about a particular lecture/topic/assignment, you must go to the professor who presented that content.
6. If your issue is not resolved by going to the involved faculty member, follow the chain of command:  
Professor → Team level coordinator → Program Director. \*\*\*\*\*
7. Respect the role of faculty as teachers, mentors, and experts in the profession and maintain appropriate boundaries. Faculty desire to see all students succeed in school, on NCLEX-RN, and in the profession of nursing, and are supportive of students in the context of the student-faculty relationship; however, faculty are not trained counselors and cannot serve in the role of mental health counselor. When student issues arise, faculty may refer students for counseling or to other resources as needed.
9. The nursing pre-licensure program is a full-time program; students are expected to be available for learning activities 5 days a week. While normal clinical is usually scheduled between 6:30 AM and 2 PM on weekdays, clinical activities may be scheduled in the evening or nighttime hours. Clinical lab days often are scheduled from 8 AM to 5 PM. When involved in clinical precepting, students may have to schedule clinical hours on weekends. Faculty make every attempt to give students as much advanced notice about schedules as possible, but as a rule, work or other activities should not be scheduled on clinical days.

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## Appendix C

### Academic Action Appeal Procedure Overview:

Students who wish to appeal a final assigned grade or dismissal from an academic program for any reason other than academic dishonesty should follow, in order, the academic appeal procedure outlined below. (n.b. For these procedures, a “working day” = a day classes are held on campus)

Appeals of a final assigned grade and appeals of dismissals from an academic program follow similar procedures:

- 1) Appeal to Instructor
- 2) Appeal to Department Head (The term “Department Head” in these procedures refers both to Department Heads and School Directors)
- 3) Appeal to Academic College – Associate Dean – may dismiss appeal or send to:
- 4) College Academic Action Committee Review
- 5) Academic Dean Review

An Appeal to Provost is only allowed for (1) alleged violations of procedures, (2) discrimination based on a protected class, or (3) the student’s exercise of rights guaranteed by the United States Constitution. No right of appeal is available beyond the Provost.

### *Final Grade Appeal Procedures:*

The following procedures detail the steps for appealing a final assigned grade (whether or not that grade results in dismissal from the Graduate School). The student is encouraged to meet/talk with the instructor prior to filing a formal appeal.

The student must demonstrate that the grade was impermissibly or arbitrarily assigned (see Academic Action Policy). That the student simply disagrees with the assigned grade does not constitute a basis for a review.

#### **(Step 1) Appeal to Instructor:**

Within 35 calendar days after the student receives notification of the academic action (grade) the student should submit a formal written appeal to the instructor. This appeal must include:

- a) a statement of the reason(s) why the student believes the grade was impermissibly or arbitrarily assigned (see policy Academic Action Appeal Policy)
- b) the resolution sought.

If the grade being appealed is leading to dismissal from the Graduate School, the Dean of the Graduate School should be copied on the student’s initial appeal. All correspondence should include contact information.

The instructor must respond to the student's request in writing as soon as possible (no later than ten working days after receiving the student's written appeal). This response should detail whether or not the instructor is approving or denying the appeal.

**(Step 2) Appeal to Department Head:**

If the student is unable to resolve the grievance through the appeal to the instructor, the student should submit a written appeal to the department head within 10 working days of receiving the instructor's written response (from Step 1). If the department head is the instructor for the grade assigned, the associate dean of the department's college will serve this function. Students appealing to the department head assume the burden of proof. Therefore, the appeal must include:

- a) A statement of the reason(s) the student believes the grade was impermissibly or arbitrarily assigned;
- b) The steps taken to resolve the disagreement over the assigned course grade; and
- c) The resolution sought.

The appeal must be accompanied by evidence the student believes supports the conclusion that the grade was impermissibly or arbitrarily assigned. Evidence might include papers, tests, syllabi, or written documentation.

Within ten working days of receiving this appeal, the department head will attempt to resolve the appeal. If the department head is unable to resolve the appeal within ten working days, the department head will notify the student of the decision, and the student has 10 days to appeal to the associate dean of the academic college.

**(Step 3) Appeal to the Academic College (Associate Dean Review):**

If appealing to the academic college, the student should forward (to the associate dean of the academic college) his/her initial Appeal to the Instructor and response from the instructor (from Step 1), the subsequent Appeal to the Department Head, and the department head's written notification (from Step 2). Upon receipt of the appeal and aforementioned materials the associate dean may request further information from the student, the instructor, and/or the department head.

If the associate dean concludes that the facts alleged by the student do not constitute permissible grounds for appeal as set forth in this Academic Action Appeal Policy or Procedures, the associate dean may, in consultation with the Dean and Graduate Dean if applicable, dismiss the review. The student will not be allowed any further appeal.

If the associate dean determines that the facts alleged in the student's written appeals could, if true, constitute a violation of the Academic Action Appeal Policy or Procedures, the associate dean, within ten working days of receiving all information, shall refer the case to the College's *Academic Action Committee*.

**(Step 4) Academic Action Committee Review:**

The *College Academic Action Committee* (CAAC) will consist of faculty members (who do not teach in the program from which the appeal originated) and students as designated by the academic college (graduate or undergraduate based upon appeal) appointed by the appropriate Academic Dean or Associate Dean. At least two of the faculty members shall be selected from “allied” disciplines or programs. The Associate Dean will serve as ex officio (non-voting) chair of this committee. The purpose of the CAAC is to determine whether the facts support the student’s contention that the grade was impermissibly or arbitrarily assigned, or there was material procedural deviation, as defined in the policy. It is not the function of the Committee to re-evaluate the student’s work to determine whether the CAAC agrees with the professional judgment of the faculty member who assigned the grade.

The CAAC Chair shall convene the Committee not later than ten working days from the request by the associate dean to examine the student’s appeals to the instructor and department head. The CAAC will also take into consideration any written statements received by the associate dean from either the student or the instructor, and any additional relevant documentation. Additionally, the CAAC may request oral presentations from both parties. Other relevant parties may be questioned.

Neither the student nor the faculty member may be accompanied or represented in the hearing by legal counsel or other advisor. The CAAC may consider only such evidence as is offered by the parties and at the hearing(s) and need consider only the evidence offered that it considers fair and reliable. The burden of proof shall be on the student to satisfy the Committee that a preponderance of the evidence supports a conclusion that the grade was awarded arbitrarily or impermissibly as defined. All recommendations of the CAAC shall be made by a simple majority vote.

Within ten working days from the conclusion of its hearing(s) on the matter, the CAAC Chair will provide a written report to the academic dean and to the graduate dean (for graduate-level grade appeals). The Committee report must include the Committee’s finding as to whether or not the grade assigned was awarded arbitrarily or impermissibly as defined in the policy. If such a determination is made, the CAAC shall recommend a course of action which could include recommending assignment of a specific grade to replace the one originally assigned or implementation of some process to re-evaluate the student’s work.

**(Step 5) Review by the Dean:**

Within ten working days after receiving the CAAC’s report, recommendations and other documentation assembled in the review, the academic Dean will, in consultation with the faculty member and department head, determine a final course of action. S/he will then communicate the final action in writing to the student, faculty member, department head, and (for graduate-level grade appeals) the dean of the Graduate School.

**Appeal to the Provost:**

An appeal to the Provost is only allowed if the student can establish a reasonable basis that the appeal procedures were not followed, discrimination of a protected class has occurred, and/or a student's exercise of rights guaranteed by the First Amendment has been violated. If the student feels one of these conditions applies, s/he must file a written appeal to the Provost explaining the situation that warrants this level of appeal. The Provost shall provide his/her written decision to the student within ten calendar days of receipt of the appeal. No appeal is available beyond the Provost.

***Substitution Provisions:*** In the event that the faculty member whose grade is being reviewed is also a department head/school director, the associate dean shall do those things required by the head or director. In the event that the faculty member whose grade is being reviewed is also an associate dean, the academic dean or Provost can name an appropriate substitute to perform the functions of the associate dean as required by this policy.

***Program Dismissal Appeal Procedures:***

The following procedures detail the steps for appealing a dismissal from a program for any reason other than final assigned grade(s), including failure to adhere to technical standards.

Dismissal from the Graduate School (and therefore dismissal from the program) based on bad grades may not be appealed. In this case, the affected student must appeal the final grade(s) resulting in the dismissal from the Graduate School. The student is encouraged to meet/talk with the program director prior to filing a formal appeal.

The student must demonstrate that dismissal was impermissibly or arbitrarily assigned (see Academic Action Policy). That the student simply disagrees with the dismissal does not constitute a basis for a review.

**(Step 1) Appeal to Program Director:**

Within 35 calendar days after the student receives notification of the academic action (cause for program dismissal) the student should submit a formal written appeal to the instructor. This appeal must include:

- a) a statement of the reason(s) why the student believes the dismissal was impermissibly or arbitrarily assigned (see policy Academic Action Appeal Policy)
- b) the resolution sought.

When appealing a dismissal from a graduate program, the student must copy the Dean of the Graduate School on this initial appeal. All correspondence should include contact information.

The program director must respond to the student's request in writing as soon as possible (no later than ten working days after receiving the student's written appeal). This response should detail whether or not the program is approving or denying the appeal.

**(Step 2) Appeal to Department Head:**

If the student is unable to resolve the grievance through the appeal to the program director, the student should submit a written appeal to the department head within 10 working days of receiving the program director's written response (from Step 1). If the department head is the instructor for the grade assigned, the associate dean of the department's college will serve this function. Students appealing to the department head assume the burden of proof. Therefore, the appeal must include:

- a) A statement of the reason(s) the student believes the dismissal was impermissibly or arbitrarily assigned;
- b) The steps taken to resolve the disagreement over the dismissal; and
- c) The resolution sought.

The appeal must be accompanied by evidence the student believes supports the conclusion that the dismissal was impermissibly or arbitrarily assigned. Evidence might include papers, tests, syllabi, or written documentation.

Within ten working days of receiving this appeal, the department head will attempt to resolve the appeal. If the department head is unable to resolve the appeal within ten working days, the department head will notify the student of the decision and copy the dean of the Graduate School, and the student has 10 days to appeal to the associate dean of the academic college.

**(Step 3) Appeal to the Academic College (Associate Dean Review):**

If appealing to the academic college, the student should forward (to the associate dean of the academic college) his/her initial Appeal to the Program Director and the program director's response (from Step 1), the subsequent Appeal to the Department Head, and the department head's written notification (from Step 2). Upon receipt of the appeal and these materials the associate dean may request further information from the student, the program director, and/or the department head.

If the associate dean concludes that the facts alleged by the student do not constitute permissible grounds for appeal as set forth in this Academic Action Appeal Policy or Procedures, the associate dean may, in consultation with the academic Dean and Graduate Dean if applicable, dismiss the review. The student will not be allowed any further appeal.

If the associate dean determines that the facts alleged in the student's written appeals could, if true, constitute a violation of the Academic Action Appeal Policy or Procedures, the associate dean, within ten working days of receiving all information, shall refer the case to the College's *Academic Action Committee*.

**(Step 4) Academic Action Committee Review:**

The *College Academic Action Committee* (CAAC) will consist of faculty members (who do not teach in the program from which the appeal originated) and students as designated by the academic college (graduate or undergraduate based upon appeal) appointed by the appropriate Academic Dean or Associate Dean. At least two of the faculty members shall be selected from “allied” disciplines or programs. The Associate Dean will serve as ex officio (non-voting) chair of this committee. The purpose of this Committee is to determine whether the facts support the student’s contention that the dismissal was impermissibly or arbitrarily assigned, or there was a material procedural deviation, as defined in the policy. It is not the function of the CAAC to re-evaluate the student’s work to determine whether the Committee agrees with the professional judgment of the program director or faculty member(s).

The CAAC Chair shall convene the Committee not later than ten working days from the request by the associate dean to examine the student’s appeals to the program director and department head. The committee will also take into consideration any written statements received by the associate dean from either the student or the program director, and any additional relevant documentation. Additionally, the Committee may request oral presentations from both parties. Other relevant parties may be questioned.

Neither the student nor the program director may be accompanied or represented in the hearing by legal counsel or other advisor. The CAAC may consider only such evidence as is offered by the parties and at the hearing(s) and need consider only the evidence offered that it considers fair and reliable. The burden of proof shall be on the student to satisfy the Committee that a preponderance of the evidence supports a conclusion that the dismissal was awarded arbitrarily or impermissibly as defined. All recommendations of the CAAC shall be made by a simple majority vote.

Within ten working days from the conclusion of its hearing(s) on the matter, the CAAC Chair will provide a written report to the academic dean and to the graduate dean (for graduate-level grade appeals). The Committee report must include the Committee’s finding as to whether or not the dismissal assigned was awarded arbitrarily or impermissibly as defined in the policy. If such a determination is made, the CAAC shall recommend a course of action which could include recommending readmission or implementation of some process to re-evaluate the student’s actions/work that lead to the program dismissal.

**(Step 5) Review by the Dean:**

Within ten working days after receiving the CAAC’s report, recommendations, and other documentation assembled in the review, the academic Dean will, in consultation with the program director and department head, determine a final course of action. S/he will then communicate the final action in writing to the student, faculty member, department head, and the dean of the Graduate School.

**Appeal to the Provost:**

An appeal to the Provost is only allowed if the student can establish a reasonable basis that the appeal procedures were not followed, discrimination of a protected class has occurred, and/or a student's exercise of rights guaranteed by the First Amendment has been violated. If the student feels one of these conditions applies, s/he must file a written appeal to the Provost explaining the situation that warrants this level of appeal. The Provost shall provide his/her written decision to the student within ten calendar days of receipt of the appeal. No right of appeal is available beyond the Provost.

***Substitution Provisions:*** In the event that the faculty member whose grade is being reviewed is also a department head/school director, the associate dean shall do those things required by the head or director. In the event that the faculty member whose grade is being reviewed is also an associate dean, the academic dean or Provost can name an appropriate substitute to perform the functions of the associate dean as required by this policy.

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## Appendix D

### WESTERN CAROLINA UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SCIENCES (Approved: May 2010)

#### ALCOHOL AND ILLEGAL DRUG TESTING POLICY for STUDENTS

##### I. Policy Statement

Western Carolina University (the “University”) is committed to maintaining a drug-free workplace and academic environment in compliance with the federal Drug Free Workplace Act of 1988 and in accordance with University Policy #38, *Illegal Drugs*, and University of North Carolina Policy 1300.1, *Illegal Drugs*. Further, the University is committed to provide campus experiences for its students that are safe, legal, and responsible, in accordance with University Policy #81, *General Campus Policy for Alcoholic Beverages*, and the University Code of Student Conduct.

##### II. University Interests

For obvious health and safety concerns, all students enrolled in the University’s College of Health and Human Sciences healthcare programs (each individually the “Program” or collectively the “Programs”) must participate in clinical education activities in full control of their manual dexterity and skills, mental faculties, and judgment. The presence of alcohol and/or drugs, lawfully prescribed or otherwise, which interfere with the student’s judgment or motor coordination in a healthcare setting poses an unacceptable risk to patients, faculty, other students, the University, and affiliated clinical agencies (i.e., hospitals, skilled nursing facilities, health systems, and other healthcare organizations involved with student education and with which the University has a clinical affiliation agreement in place). The University recognizes its responsibility to provide for a safe academic environment for University students, faculty, and staff, as well as a safe clinical setting for students and patients and employees of affiliated clinical agencies. For the foregoing reasons, the University and the College have adopted this policy to further the following interests:

1. To prevent the possession, consumption or distribution of illegal drugs, which violates applicable federal and state law, University Policy #38 and/or the University Code of Student Conduct and substantially adversely impacts the efficacy and integrity of the Programs;
2. To promote the safe, legal, and responsible purchase, consumption or possession of alcohol, in accordance with University Policy #81, *General Campus Policy for Alcoholic Beverages*
3. To ensure, to the extent possible, the health and safety of students, faculty, and staff, and to promote the general welfare of the University community;
4. To ensure, to the extent possible, the health and safety of patients who are admitted to affiliated clinical agencies and receive direct patient care from students;
5. To cooperate with affiliated clinical agencies by ensuring, to the extent possible, that students comply with agency policies, rules, and regulations pertaining to the placement of students in clinical/practical experiences, including agency alcohol and drug testing policies;

6. To comply with affiliated clinical agency contractual requirements pertaining to student criminal background screening and drug screening; and
7. To ensure, to the extent possible, that students participating in the Programs are academically prepared and fully qualified for licensure by the applicable state licensing board.

### **III. Healthcare Professions Licensure Requirements**

Students in the Programs shall be familiar with applicable legal and ethical requirements set forth in North Carolina state licensure laws and regulations pertaining to healthcare professions and occupations.

North Carolina healthcare professions and occupations licensing boards may initiate an investigation upon receipt of information about any practice that may violate any provision of the licensing statute or any rule or regulation of the board. Boards generally have the power to: (i) refuse to issue a license; (ii) refuse to issue a certificate of renewal of a license; (iii) revoke or suspend a license; and (iv) invoke other such disciplinary measures, censure, or probative terms against a licensee if the board finds that an applicant or licensee:

1. has given false information or has withheld material information from the board in procuring or attempting to procure a license;
2. has been convicted of or pleaded guilty or nolo contendere to any crime which indicates that the applicant/licensee is unfit or incompetent to practice his/her occupation or that the applicant/licensee has deceived or defrauded the public;
3. has a mental or physical disability or uses any drug to a degree that interferes with his/her fitness to practice his/her occupation;
4. engages in conduct that endangers the public health;
5. is unfit or incompetent to practice his/her occupation by reason of deliberate or negligent acts or omissions regardless of whether actual injury to the patient is established; or
6. engages in conduct that deceives, defrauds, or harms the public in the course of professional activities or services.

### **IV. Definitions**

“Drug testing” means the scientific analysis of urine, blood, breath, saliva, hair, tissue, and other specimens of the human body for the purpose of detecting a drug or alcohol.

1. “Pre-placement testing” means drug testing conducted on all students prior to engaging in a clinical experience and/or providing direct patient care at an affiliated clinical agency if the agency requests such testing.
2. “Reasonable suspicion testing” means drug testing conducted on a student because individualized and objective evidence exists to support the conclusion that a student (1) has engaged in the use of alcohol and/or illegal drugs in

violation of applicable policies, laws, and regulations; or (2) appears to be impaired. Facts that could give rise to reasonable suspicion include, without limitation: observed possession or use of illegal drugs or alcohol; the odor of alcohol or drugs; impaired behavior such as slurred speech; decreased motor coordination; difficulty in maintaining balance; marked changes in personality or academic performance or behavior; reports of observed drug or alcohol use; an arrest or conviction for a drug or alcohol related offense; positive pre-placement or other drug tests; or newly discovered evidence of drug test tampering.

“Illegal drug” for purposes of this policy means (a) any drug which is not legally obtainable; (b) any drug which is legally obtainable but has not been legally obtained; (c) any prescribed drug not being used for the prescribed purpose, in the prescribed dosage and manner, or by the person for whom it was prescribed; (d) any over-the-counter drug being used at a dosage other than the recommended dosage, or being used for a purpose other than the purpose intended by the manufacturer; and (e) any drug being used in a manner that is not consistent with established medical practice standards. Examples of illegal drugs include, without limitation, stimulants, depressants, narcotics, analgesics, hallucinogenics, and cannabis substances such as marijuana and hashish.

“Impaired” means that a person’s mental or physical capabilities are reduced below their normal levels (with or without any reasonable accommodation for disability). An impaired student, by virtue of his/her use of alcohol or illegal drugs, exhibits deteriorated motor/psychomotor function, reduced conceptual/integrative/synthetic thought processes, and/or diminished judgment and attentiveness compared with previous observations of the student’s conduct and performance. For purposes of this policy, the term impaired shall also mean addiction and/or physical or mental dependence upon alcohol or illegal drugs.

## **V. Procedural Requirements**

### **A. Prohibited Conduct and Duty to Notify of Charges/Convictions**

1. Under no circumstance should a student participate in Program courses or clinical experiences while he/she is impaired.
2. Under no circumstance should a student manufacture, use, possess, sell or distribute illegal drugs in violation of applicable federal and state laws and/or applicable Program and University policies, including the University Code of Student Conduct.
3. Under no circumstance should a student purchase, consume or possess alcohol in violation of applicable state laws and/or applicable Program and University policies, including the University Code of Student Conduct.
4. A violation by any student of applicable federal or state laws or regulations pertaining to the manufacture, use, possession, sale or distribution an illegal drug, or a violation by any student of applicable state laws pertaining to the purchase, consumption or possession of alcoholic beverages is strictly prohibited. Students have an affirmative duty under this policy to report any criminal charges, convictions or plea agreements that are related to the manufacture, use, possession, sale or distribution of an illegal drug, or the purchase, consumption or possession of an alcoholic beverage. Such violations, if substantiated, will result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal from the Program, in

accordance with established Program disciplinary policies and procedures. Such violations will also result in a referral to the Department of Student Community Ethics (“DSCE”) for investigation and University discipline if warranted.

5. A student who violates any provision of this Section V.A will be deemed to be *unable to meet the essential functions and technical standards* of the Program and will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal from the Program.

## **B. Agreement to Submit to Drug and Alcohol Testing**

1. A student participating in a Program must agree to submit to pre-placement testing and reasonable suspicion testing when circumstances warrant such testing. The student shall sign an acknowledgment and consent form (Attachment A) that evidences the student’s consent to: (a) comply with University, College, and Program policies pertaining to alcohol and illegal drugs; (b) comply with all policies and regulations of affiliated clinical agencies pertaining to alcohol and illegal drugs; (c) submit to pre-placement testing, reasonable suspicion drug testing under this policy, and in the event an affiliated clinical agency requires random drug testing pursuant to its policies, to submit to random drug testing; and (d) authorize the disclosure of drug testing results to the Dean of the College of Health and Human Sciences. Refusal to sign the acknowledgment and consent form shall be grounds for non-placement in clinical experiences and subsequent dismissal from the Program.

## **C. Pre-Placement Drug and Alcohol Testing**

1. Pre-placement drug testing will be coordinated through the office of the Dean of the College of Health and Human Sciences, and will be conducted by a qualified vendor under contract with the University. The cost of drug testing shall be borne by the student. The student shall be provided with a list of drugs for testing as may be required by either the Program or an affiliated clinical agency.
2. Positive pre-placement drug tests will be confirmed by additional tests.
3. The Dean of the College of Health and Human Sciences will notify a student of a confirmed positive drug test.
4. A student having a confirmed positive drug test will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal from the Program, in accordance with established College or Program disciplinary policies and procedures. Positive drug tests will also be referred to DSCE for investigation and University discipline if warranted.
5. A student’s failure to submit to pre-placement drug testing, or any attempt to tamper with, contaminate or switch a sample will result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal from the Program.

#### **D. Reasonable Suspicion Drug and Alcohol Testing**

1. Reasonable suspicion drug testing may be conducted when individualized and objective evidence exists to support the conclusion that a student (1) has engaged in the use of alcohol and/or illegal drugs in violation of applicable policies, laws, and regulations; or (2) appears to be impaired.
2. Evidence of a student's use of alcohol and/or illegal drugs or impairment may be provided by any individual, including employees of affiliated clinical agencies. Reasonable suspicion drug testing will be coordinated through the office of the Dean of the College of Health and Human Sciences, and the determination of whether drug testing is warranted under the facts and circumstances shall be made by the Dean and the University General Counsel. The cost of drug testing shall be borne by the student. The student shall be provided with a list of drugs for testing as may be required by either the Program or an affiliated clinical agency.
3. Positive reasonable suspicion drug tests will be confirmed by additional tests.
4. The Dean of the College of Health and Human Sciences will notify a student of a confirmed positive drug test.
5. A student having a confirmed positive drug test will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal from the Program, in accordance with established Program disciplinary policies and procedures. Positive drug tests will also be referred to DSCE for investigation and University discipline if warranted.
6. A student's failure to submit to reasonable suspicion drug testing, or any attempt to tamper with, contaminate or switch a sample will result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal from the Program.

#### **VI. Confidentiality**

All drug testing results shall be used, maintained, and disclosed by the College and/or University only as permitted by and in strict compliance with all applicable federal and state laws and regulations pertaining to confidential and protected health information and student records.

#### **VII. Appeals**

A student may avail him/herself of any grievance and appeal procedures relating to any Program action taken under this policy, in accordance with the Program's established grievance procedures, which are published in the applicable Program student manuals.

**Attachment A**

**WESTERN CAROLINA UNIVERSITY  
College of Health and Human Sciences**

**Acknowledgement and Consent Form**

I have read and understand the College of Health and Human Sciences Alcohol and Illegal Drug Testing Policy for Students (“Policy”). I also have had an opportunity to ask questions about the Policy.

By my signature below, I agree to comply with the requirements of the College, Program, this Policy, and all applicable policies and regulations of the University and affiliated clinical agencies. Further, as a condition of participation in the Program, I knowingly and voluntarily consent to submit to any requisite pre-placement drug testing, reasonable suspicion drug testing required by the University, or any random drug testing required by an affiliated clinical agency.

I hereby authorize the disclosure of any and all drug testing results to the Dean of the College of Health and Human Sciences.

**I hereby agree, for myself and on behalf of my successors, heirs, and assigns, to hold harmless and waive any and all claims and release, satisfy, and forever discharge Western Carolina University and its trustees, officers, and employees, and the University of North Carolina and its governors, officers, and employees from any and all actions, claims, damages, judgments, demands, rights, and causes of action of whatever kind or nature, arising out of or in connection with the College’s, Program’s, and University’s administration of the Policy.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name

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## Appendix E

August 5, 2010: Approved by Executive Council

### WESTERN CAROLINA UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SCIENCES

#### CRIMINAL BACKGROUND SCREENING POLICY for STUDENTS

##### **Policy Statement**

Western Carolina University and the College of Health and Human Sciences is committed to the safety of the campus community and the agencies, clients, and patients we serve. While some programs require criminal background screening of all students prior to clinical placement (e.g. School of Nursing and the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders) other programs will require background screenings of students if an outside agency or placement requests them. Students should be advised that criminal background screening is also required for many health care provider licensures.

Depending on the terms and conditions of any applicable clinical affiliation agreement, criminal background screening will be performed in accordance with the following academic progression guidelines:

##### **1. Screening by Clinical Site**

Criminal background screening will be performed in its entirety by the clinical site, in accordance with its applicable policies and procedures.

##### **2. Investigation by Third Party; Results Provided to Clinical Site**

Criminal background investigation will be performed, at the student's expense, by a third party vendor under contract with UNC/WCU (e.g., Certiphi), with the results of the investigation sent directly to the clinical site for review and judgment in accordance with its applicable policies and procedures

##### **3. Investigation by Third Party; Results Provided to College**

Criminal background investigation will be performed, at the student's expense, by a third party vendor under contract with UNC/WCU (e.g., Certiphi), with the results of the investigation sent to the Dean's Office for review and judgment in accordance with applicable College policies and procedures. If possible, review and judgment of a student's criminal background history for placement in a particular clinical site should be performed using that clinical site's policies and procedures/criteria, which have been provided to College for that purpose. This should be addressed in the clinical affiliation agreement.

Review of criminal background investigations by the Dean's Office should be performed in accordance with one of the following procedures.

##### **4. Investigation by Third Party: Reviewed Using College Criteria**

Criminal background investigation will be performed, at the student's expense, by a third party vendor under contract with UNC/WCU (e.g., Certiphi), with the results of the investigation sent to the Dean's Office for review and judgment in accordance with applicable College policies and procedures.

##### **Procedures:**

1. The Dean's Administrative Assistant (DAA) in the College of Health and Human Sciences will perform a preliminary investigation of students' criminal background check (CBC) prior to clinical placement.

2. The DAA will notify the School Director or Department Head if students have “passed” the CBC (no criminal activity found) or if the student’s CBC needs review (indicating criminal activity found). No other information will be provided to the Director or Department Head related to the CBC.
3. For students who need review, the DAA will notify the Dean and the Associate Dean. The Associate Dean will convene three to five members of the Academic Action Committee who will then review the case. The Associate Dean will serve as ex officio (non-voting) chair of this committee. At least one faculty member on the committee should represent the major or discipline of the student(s) who need CBC review. In cases of CBC review, students will not serve as committee members (unlike other academic action appeals).
4. The Academic Action Committee will review the student’s CBC for the following felonies. A conviction or plea of guilty or no contest to any of the **felonies** noted below will **disqualify** the student from participating in a clinical learning experience.
  - a. Homicide
  - b. Kidnapping and abduction
  - c. Assaults with weapons or inflicting serious injury
  - d. Rape or other sex offense
  - e. Robbery or larceny
  - f. Abuse, neglect or exploitation of children, disabled adults or elder adults
5. Any other types of felony or misdemeanor convictions, including sale, possession, distribution or transfer of controlled substances, or questionable criminal histories will be reviewed by the Academic Action Committee in accordance with the following criteria:
  - a. Would the student pose a threat to the health and safety of the university community and any patient or client?
  - b. What were the:
    - 1) The dates, locations, and nature of the conduct/crime?
    - 2) Characteristics of the victim(s)?
    - 3) Frequency of convictions or pleas?
    - 4) Opinions of law enforcement officials, district attorney?
  - c. In addition, is/are there:
    - 5) Any pending charges?
    - 6) Evidence of successful rehabilitation?
    - 7) Evidence of remorse/accountability?
    - 8) Positive references?
    - 9) Evidence of the accuracy and truthfulness of the information submitted?
6. Based on the above criteria, a recommendation by the Academic Action Committee will be submitted to the Dean of the College of Health and Human Sciences. The Dean may accept the recommendation of the Committee or make an alternative decision. The decision of the Dean will be final. Once the decision is made, the Dean’s office will notify the School Director or Department Head and the student.

**Note: Confidentiality of Records**

Criminal background screening records are confidential and will not be shared with anyone other than faculty/staff involved in the case as indicated above. All records will be kept in a secure location in the Dean’s office.

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