

Post-Licensure Nursing Student Handbook

2018-2019

Supplemental
to

The Western Carolina University Undergraduate Catalog

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WELCOME

I extend to you a warm and heart-felt welcome to the Western Carolina University School of Nursing! We are excited that you chose Western to pursue a nursing degree and I am personally looking forward to working with you to ensure your success and in reaching your education goals. You are entering a rewarding and extraordinary profession at a time in an ever-changing healthcare environment. You are the future of nursing.

As you begin your educational journey with us, I want you to be aware of the many resources available to you that will enhance your learning opportunities and experiences. Many of those resources are outlined in this handbook. Specifically, you will find in the pages to follow the School of nursing policies and procedures and other information that will better assist you in managing the demands of your program. I trust that you will take advantage of these opportunities as they are especially for you.

I am thrilled that you are part of the Western family and I wish you great success in your studies. I hope to have the opportunity in the near future to meet you personally.

Again, welcome to Western and Go Cats!

*Anthony James Roberson, PhD, PMHNP-BC, RN, FAANP
Director and Professor
Western Carolina University
School of Nursing*

Instructions to students concerning the *Post-Licensure Nursing Student Handbook*

All students in the nursing program are responsible for reading and understanding the information contained in the *Post-Licensure Student Handbook for Nursing Majors* and adhering to any policy changes and/or updates in subsequent editions. Each student must read the *Post-Licensure Student Handbook* and submit a signed copy of the Student Handbook Agreement upon admission to the nursing program. The signed copy will be placed in the student's file. The Student Handbook Agreement is located in the appendices and is accessible on the School of Nursing Student Services website and in Blackboard RN to BSN Homeplace and RIBN Homeplace.

I. THE WESTERN CAROLINA UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF NURSING

A. Introduction to Western Carolina University

Western Carolina University (WCU) is a regional 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 Undergraduate Catalog contains authoritative information concerning the University, student services, academic regulations, the University calendar, and degree requirements. The WCU Undergraduate Catalog is published in both undergraduate and graduate versions. Students are to obtain a copy of WCU Undergraduate Catalog and refer to it for guidance. The WCU Undergraduate Catalog is available online at <http://catalog.wcu.edu/>.

B. Introduction to the School of Nursing

The North Carolina Legislature, at the urging of WCU and the people of the western counties, established a baccalaureate program in nursing at WCU in 1969 and appropriated funds for its support.

The first director of the program was Dr. Mary K. Kneedler, a nationally recognized leader in health care who helped develop the Head Start program under President Lyndon Johnson. The first class of BSN students graduated in 1973. In 1982, the RN to BSN program was started.

The master's program was initiated in 1999 with the Family Nurse Practitioner as the first track. We now also offer tracks in Nursing Education, Nursing Administration and Nursing Anesthesia at the graduate level.

In May of 2007 we also started an accelerated entry option for our pre-licensure program for individuals with baccalaureate degrees in other fields. In July of 2007 we were re-named as a School of Nursing. Fall of 2009 marked the School of Nursing's 40th anniversary.

In 2008 we added the Nurse Administration track to the master's in nursing program. Soon thereafter we introduced the Regionally Increasing Baccalaureate Nurses (RIBN) Program. Joining forces with Asheville Buncombe Technical Community College, the RIBN Program allows students to be dually enrolled in the community college and WCU to earn both their Associate Degree in Nursing and Bachelor of Science Degree in Nursing within four years. This RIBN Program expanded in 2013 to include two additional regional community colleges. In 2013, the School of Nursing established a Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) program jointly with University of North Carolina Charlotte (UNCC).

The School now has well over 2000 alumni who practice in practicum and leadership roles nationwide. Students who graduate from our programs perform well on their licensure or certification exams with pass rates well above national averages.

Students have the opportunity for practicum experiences in many different types of health care institutions and agencies. A strong element of our programs is that we offer practicum opportunities in rural and urban areas, providing students with diverse practice experiences.

The School of Nursing is approved by the North Carolina Board of Nursing and accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education. The Master's in Nurse Anesthesia is also accredited by the Council on Accreditation of Nurse Anesthesia Educational Programs.

C. Organization of the School of Nursing

Please see the link below for a list of the faculty and staff of the School of Nursing.

nursingdirectory.wcu.edu

D. Introduction to the Post-Licensure Baccalaureate Nursing Program

- i. 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. RN to BSN Program coursework is conducted online (distance learning). Practicum nursing experiences are held at appropriate health care agencies geographically convenient to students.
- ii. The [RN to MSN Early Entry Option](#) is designed to assist RNs with good academic records to move smoothly through the RN to BSN curriculum directly into MSN study for advanced nursing roles. The RN to MSN Early Entry Option is only available for the Nurse Educator and Nursing Leadership programs. RN to BSN students may apply for consideration for this option after they have completed 12 hours of RN to BSN nursing courses. If accepted, the 500-level core graduate nursing courses will be applied to the RN to BSN requirement for up to 8 credits of undergraduate electives. Students maintain undergraduate status until completion of the BSN and are not guaranteed acceptance into the master's program. Students should refer to the Post-Licensure Handbook, their RN to BSN advisor, and the coordinator of the RN to MSN Early Entry Option for questions about this program.
- iii. The [Regionally Increasing Baccalaureate Nurses \(RIBN\) Program](#) is a separate option for students desiring a career as a bachelor-of-science educated registered nurse. Students are dually enrolled at Western Carolina University

(WCU) and at a collaborative community college. These students have to meet both schools/programs admission requirements. Major prerequisites and nursing courses for the first three years will be taken at the community college; students will take one liberal studies course per semester at WCU during that time. The fourth year will be full-time nursing courses at WCU.

E. Mission, Vision, and Philosophy of the School of Nursing

i. *Mission of the School of Nursing*

Educate nurse leaders who are dedicated to caring and participating with individuals, families and communities to meet health needs.

ii. *Vision of the School of Nursing*

To be recognized for excellence in the transformation of health care through the scholarship of teaching, practice and research.

iii. *Philosophy of the School of Nursing*

The Philosophy of the School of Nursing reflects the beliefs and values of the faculty and gives direction to the baccalaureate, masters and doctoral curricula. The baccalaureate graduate is a generalist who designs, provides, manages and coordinates nursing care in a variety of health care settings. The masters and doctoral curriculum build on the baccalaureate education and prepares graduates to practice in advanced roles.

Nursing is a discipline of knowledge and professional practice. Nursing occurs in relationship with self and others and requires the intentional presence of the nurse. The focus of nursing is to improve health outcomes with individuals, families and communities through caring.

The professionalization of caring in nursing includes:

Competence – knowledge, wisdom, skills, judgment, experience and motivation.

Compassion – a shared awareness and connectedness with the experiences of others.

Commitment – a deliberate choice to act in accordance with beliefs and obligations.

Conscience – a state of moral awareness.

Confidence – the internal belief that one will act in a right, proper, or effective way which fosters trusting relationships.

Comportment– demeanor, conduct, personal bearing, behavior (Roach, 1997).

Excellence in nursing requires a blending of science and art. Nursing science is the body of nursing knowledge derived from the integration of theory, research, and practice. The art of nursing is the creative integration of empirical, personal, ethical, intuitive, esthetic ways of knowing in practice. The art of nursing is that which humanizes the delivery of nursing care.

Learning in nursing occurs through the integration of multiple ways of knowing. Self-awareness, reflection, and ethical and critical reasoning are important aspects of the learning that occurs in practice situations and through interprofessional collaboration. A supportive environment for learning is one which respects and values the contributions of each person and is a collaborative relationship between faculty, and students. The completion of a nursing degree is not an end-point but the beginning of a life-long commitment to learning.

Roach, S. (1997). *Caring from the heart: The convergence of caring and spirituality*. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press.

01/10/2013

F. Program Outcomes and Curricula

i. *List of Program Outcomes*

Upon completion of the BSN program (RN to BSN and RIBN), graduates will be able to:

- Apply principles of therapeutic communication with individuals and communicate professionally both orally and in written form.
- Use elements and standards of reasoning within the nursing process.
- Collaborate in goal-directed manner when performing nursing care and working with other healthcare providers.
- Recognize the need to incorporate professional nursing values.
- Access data and information from print, electronic and other sources.
-

ii. *RN to BSN Curriculum Plan*

The RN to BSN required courses are laid out in four six-hour blocks plus electives.

Introductory RN to BSN Block: Must be taken as the first block alone or with electives

- NSG 301, Professional Transitions in Nursing, 3 hrs
- NSG 398, APA Writing Style and Format, 1 hr
- NSG 399, Clinical Update for RNs, 2 hrs

Community Health Block: May be taken as the second or third block

- NSG 302, Community Health Nursing I: Theory, 3 hrs
- NSG 305, Community Health Nursing, III: Intervention Project, 2 hrs
- NSG 384, Community Health Nursing II: Practicum, 1 hr

Leadership Block: May be taken as the second or third block

- NSG 460, Nursing Leadership I: Theory, 3 hrs
- NSG 483, Nursing Leadership II: Practicum, 2 hrs
- NSG 484, Nursing Leadership III: Intervention Project, 1 hr

Research Block: Should be taken as the final block

- NSG 471, Nursing Research I: Research Process, 2 hrs
- NSG 472, Nursing Research II: Critical Reading, 2 hrs
- NSG 473, Nursing Research III: Clinical Application, 2 hrs

Electives: Six to Eight hours of upper-division (300-400 level) electives (or 500 level MSN courses in the RN to MSN Early Entry option) taken at WCU complete the program.

iii. ***RIBN Option Curriculum Plan***

RIBN students concurrently complete an online elective course through WCU during each semester of the first three years. Students must take NSG 346 at WCU during the summer between the 2nd and 3rd year. The 4th year curriculum is completed exclusively at WCU and consists of the following courses:

Fall Semester

- **NSG 322** Concepts of Geriatric Nursing (2 hrs)
- **NSG 327** Essentials of Baccalaureate Nursing Practice I (4 hrs)
- **Community Health Nursing**
 - **NSG 302** Community Health Nursing I: Theory, 3 hrs
 - **NSG 305** Community Health Nursing, III: Intervention Project, 2 hrs
 - **NSG 384** Community Health Nursing II: Practicum, 1 hr

Spring Semester

- **NSG 328** Essentials of Baccalaureate Nursing Practice II (3 hrs)
- **NSG 329** Essentials of Baccalaureate Nursing Practice Practicum (3 hrs)
- **Research**
 - **NSG 471** Nursing Research I: Research Process, 2 hrs
 - **NSG 472** Nursing Research II: Critical Reading, 2 hrs
 - **NSG 473** Nursing Research III: Clinical Application, 2 hrs

II. EDUCATIONAL POLICIES, PROCEDURES, AND INFORMATION

The Undergraduate Nursing Student Handbook for Nursing Majors (Post-Licensure Tracks) is available on the School of Nursing website and must be downloaded and read by the student. The student is responsible for following the School of Nursing policies as presented in this document.

As noted in the WCU Undergraduate Catalog, the School of Nursing reserves the right to modify school policies and procedures. Students must periodically consult their nursing faculty advisor to obtain current information. The School of Nursing will make every effort to notify currently enrolled majors of any changes. Changes and updates to student information will be posted on the School of Nursing website. Students must keep the school informed of their current address, phone numbers, and email address, and update these both in MyWCU and by email to wcunursing@wcu.edu.

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.

A. General Information

i. *Admissions and Progression*

a. RN to BSN Admission

Admission criteria for the RN to BSN Program can be found on the [RN to BSN Program admission website](#).

b. RIBN Admission

Students must meet the admission requirements of the collaborative community college and Western Carolina University. Specific details can be found in the application materials available from the Student Success Advisor at the collaborative community college.

c. Transfer of Upper-Division Nursing Credits

Any student seeking a WCU BSN must take at least 25% of the total hours required for graduation by upper-division credit from WCU. According to the WCU Undergraduate Catalog, “the applicability of transferred credits toward degree requirements is determined by the Registrar’s Office and the School of Nursing 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.” The WCU Undergraduate Catalog 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.”

d. Credit by Examination

Credit by examination is another option for students wishing to “place out” of upper-division nursing courses. The School of Nursing adheres to the WCU policy set forth in the WCU Undergraduate Catalog. Students who want to try this option should contact the Program Director 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.

RIBN students must enroll in a WCU course concurrently during the first three years of the program. Consult the Office of Student Services to determine if the CLEP option would be advantageous to your plan of study.

e. Progression in the Major

RN to BSN Progression

Academic Progress Warning: A student who is not progressing satisfactorily in a course or in the program will receive documentation of academic warning and recommendation that the student meet with his/her academic advisor to discuss academic assistance. This form will be provided to the student and includes information on areas needing improvement and suggested strategies for improvement. Faculty will sign the form. The student must sign and return the form within one week. The completed form will be placed in the student folder; a copy will be forwarded to both Program Director and Advisor. If unsatisfactory progression involves clinical performance, the student may be placed on Clinical Probation. See Appendix D.

An RN to BSN student must maintain a cumulative GPA of 2.5 and demonstrate professional and safe nursing practice. A student who receives a grade of C-, D, F or U in any required course

(major or elective) will be dismissed from the program.

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 program standards should consult with their course professor and/or academic advisor 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 Undergraduate Catalog or run the risk of a grade of F 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.

Once dismissed from the RN to BSN Program, a student cannot register for nursing courses and may not be re-admitted for one year. RN to BSN students seeking readmission must petition in writing to the RN to BSN Program Director and must reapply to the program. Approval for re-admission may be accompanied by additional requirements. A re-admitted student who receives any additional grade of C- or lower or a U in a course will be permanently dismissed.

RIBN Progression

The minimum standards for continuation in the RIBN track include meeting the following requirements:

1. During the first three years, students will complete the general education and nursing requirements to complete the associate degree in nursing. Students in RIBN will also be taking courses for the BSN at both the community college and with the university. The university courses during the first three years will satisfy the liberal arts curriculum as well as the pathophysiology course for the BSN. Students must start in year one of the program and be dual enrolled the first three years, as defined by the articulation agreement and curriculum outlined in this handbook.
2. During the final year, RIBN students will be full-time (12 credit hours/semester) in the WCU nursing program.
3. RIBN students must meet all academic requirements to continue in the RIBN track. A RIBN student must maintain a cumulative GPA of 2.25 and demonstrate professional and safe nursing practice. RIBN students must pass **all** courses with a grade of “C” or better. This includes **all** nursing and non-nursing coursework at both the community college and at Western Carolina University. Only during year one may a course be retaken to achieve a “C” or better and must be completed prior to the start of the second year. During years 2, 3 and 4 of the RIBN track, failure to achieve a “C” or better in all coursework will result in dismissal from the RIBN track. Please note the following:
 - a. Some classes are only taught during certain semesters at the community college. For example, CHM 132 may only be taught during the spring term. If a grade of “C” or higher isn’t met, and the course cannot be taken at another community college, another university or at Western Carolina University, the student will be dismissed from the RIBN program.

- b. A grade of an “incomplete” in any course must be resolved prior to continuation in the RIBN track to the next semester coursework.
 - c. Students should not drop a course without prior consultation with the Student Success Advisor to ensure that the course can be taken prior to the next year of nursing coursework. To ensure the highest chances of success, changing any sequence of classes is **not** recommended.
4. Progression to year 4 of the RIBN track option requires completion of all associate degree coursework and graduation from the community college; completion of all non-nursing coursework at Western Carolina University and a passing score on the NCLEX- RN examination. Students are not required to work during the fourth year of the RIBN track. It is not recommended that students work full time during their final year. Part-time hours need to be limited to focus on successful completion of their fourth year. RIBN students will be in school full time during their final year in the program.
5. Progression in any of the nursing programs is contingent upon
 - Following policy set forth in the Nursing program handbook and community college student calendar and catalog
 - Adhering to guidelines found in the course syllabus, calendar and description
 - Demonstration of practicum skills commensurate with progress in the program and supportive of safe nursing practice
 - Professional behaviors as outlined in the ANA code of ethics and handbooks
 - Meeting all requirements as per practicum agency contract to remain in the nursing program
 - Purchasing and maintaining all required materials
6. Each nursing program believes that professional behavior is an integral part of each student’s nursing education. The student is expected to demonstrate the professionalism of a nurse as outlined by the American Nurses Association (ANA) Code of Ethics (as below), the community college student handbook and the nursing

program handbook upon entering the nursing program. You are expected to behave with professionalism whether you are in the classroom, lab, or practicum setting. Professional behavior may be reinforced by utilizing various college-specific policies and/or tools.

f. Maintenance of Current Licensure

It is the RN to BSN and RIBN student's responsibility to maintain continuous state licensure as an RN in any state while enrolled in the Program. RN license or compact license is required for the state in which the practicum will be completed.

g. Readmission to the Major

RN to BSN Program

Students who forgo enrolling in any courses for 1-2 semesters must promptly notify their faculty advisor. Students who stop-out for 1-2 semesters must still adhere to program requirements such as practicum and health documentation deadlines that may occur prior to resuming enrollment. Re-enrollment in degree requirement courses is dependent upon seat availability.

Students who are not consecutively enrolled for 3 or more semesters (including Summer) and are in good academic standing must reapply to the University and the RN to BSN Program. Students must contact the Student Services Specialist for reapplication and deadline information.

Readmission to the program will be based upon available space, student's previous performance and faculty recommendations.

If a student withdraws from the Introductory Block, the student must submit a new application for admission consideration. Admission for students who do not complete the Introductory Block courses will not automatically be deferred to a subsequent semester.

Current policies and procedures pertaining to grades, indebtedness, and refunds are applicable upon withdrawal from the University. A student who withdraws from the University either during or at the end of a term for any reason is responsible for clearing any indebtedness to the WCU Bookstore, Financial Aid Office, Controller's Office, library, academic departments, and health services or other applicable University student services.

RIBN

Year 1 of RIBN: Students in RIBN must pass **all first** year classes with a “C” or greater, as outlined on the RIBN curriculum. If that standard isn’t met, application for re-entry into the first year of the RIBN program must be submitted during the regular admissions cycle. The student seeking readmission to the first year is required to submit a new application packet to the RIBN Student Success Advisor. 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.

Years 2 through 4: Students who have failed (earned a course grade less than C) for two or more nursing courses are not eligible for readmission to the RIBN track. Students applying for re-entry into years two, three or four are required to submit a request for re-entry to both the community college and also Western Carolina University. Application for re-entry to both the community college and WCU should be submitted in one packet for review and should be submitted to the RIBN Student Success Advisor. There is an abbreviated application form that can be obtained from WCU School of Nursing Student Services. Consult the community college nursing department for the specific readmission policy. For consideration for re-entry to WCU, a student should submit a written request for readmission addressed to the chairperson of the WCU School of Nursing Undergraduate Student Affairs Committee. Approval for re-admission to years 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, as well as a plan for success, which addresses strategies for improvement, as applicable. 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.

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. Re-entry is based on availability of a seat in the RIBN track.

ii. Academic Information

a. Introduction to WCU

Due to the unique characteristics of the nursing program, attendance at orientation sessions is required at the beginning of each semester (face to face or online). Failure to attend orientation results in forfeiture of admission. Transfer students new to WCU are strongly encouraged also to attend general orientation sessions arranged by the University. All

students should familiarize themselves with the WCU Undergraduate Catalog and the behaviors expected of WCU students

b. Grading Standards

The School of Nursing uses a standard grading scale for all non-practicum BSN courses taught in the major:

A+ = 98 – 100	B+ = 88 – 90	C+ = 80 – 82	D+ = 72 – 74	F = 0 – 66
A = 93 – 97	B = 85 – 87	C = 77 – 79	D = 69 – 71	
A- = 91 – 92	B- = 83 – 84	C- = 75 – 76	D- = 67 – 68	

It is a School of Nursing 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+. Practicum courses and independent study are graded Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory.

There is no make-up work for low or failing grades. Faculty will respond appropriately to student requests for rechecking the accuracy of grading. Feedback (grading) will be given within one week of the due date for student assignments or tests. If there will be any further delay in feedback, instructors will communicate this to the students.

Assignments are available to students at the start of the course. Five percent will be deducted per each calendar day late up to a total of 35%. At the end of the seven day period, the assignment will not be accepted, and the grade is zero. In courses graded S/U work must be submitted to the satisfaction of the professor or the student will receive a grade of U for the assignment and potentially the final grade as outlined in the syllabus grading procedures.

RN to BSN students must earn a C or higher (C- or below is not acceptable) in all core RN to BSN courses and upper-division electives to progress in the program.

RIBN students must earn a minimum passing grade on exams as defined by each course syllabus and must be achieved for progression in the major. See the RIBN Progression section for additional details.

The weighted exam average including the final must equal 77% or higher to pass the course. Once the 77% or higher is obtained, the grades for the additional assignments will be calculated into the final grade. If a 77% exam average is not achieved, the final grade will be the exam average.

c. Format for all Student Documents

All scholarly assignments must be submitted as Word documents using the most current edition of the *Publication Manual of the American*

Psychological Association's APA style.

Submit all assignments in Blackboard as an attached Word document rather than in the body of an email. Students must use the following file naming convention when submitting course documents:

CourseID_lastname_firstname_daymonthyear_title
(Title means the NAME of the paper or assignment)

d. Computer Requirement

Students are required to have computer for use throughout the nursing program.

e. Online Testing Software

The School of Nursing currently uses an online testing program for all exams and tests. This is a required program and access must be purchased each academic year for all courses that have online testing. Students are responsible for insuring that their computers are up-to-date and compatible with the software.

f. Use of References for Assignments

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 School of Nursing is the most current edition of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*.

g. Penalties

Grade penalties are outlined in the Attendance Policy and in the criteria for each assignment. All assignments have a due date and time. In courses graded Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory (S/U) written work must be submitted to the satisfaction of the professor or the student will receive a grade of U for the assignment. Failure to complete satisfactory written work in a S/U course could result in a grade of U, as outlined in the syllabus grading procedures.

h. Faculty Office Hours

Individual faculty are available for appointments during each semester. To make an appointment the student should use their MyWCU email account and include the following: 92#, date/time preferences, contact information, and reason for the appointment.

i. Advising

The Office of Student Services will assign each student a nursing faculty advisor. Please note: The ultimate responsibility for choosing classes, adding and/or dropping classes, and meeting curriculum and

graduation requirements rests with the student, not the advisor.

The student advisee is expected to:

- Consult the WCU Undergraduate Catalog and the Schedule of Classes to become familiar with procedures and deadlines.
- Review all communication from the advisor, especially prior to registration.
- Confirm receipt of the Advising Letter by replying to the advisor's email.
- Register for courses according to Plan of Progression as identified in the Advising Letter.
- Notify advisor if major problems are expected or encountered.
- Keep the advisor informed about academic difficulties **AS THEY OCCUR**.
- If the assigned advisor is not meeting the student's needs, email the RN to BSN program director.
- Complete evaluation of the advising process.

The Nursing Faculty Advisor is expected to:

- Be available for advising.
- Help the student find answers to questions regarding Liberal Studies and major requirements.
- Know about university resources and make referrals as needed.
- Assist students with identifying University resources, and understanding academic policies such as the grade point average, effect of repeats and withdrawals, probation status, and the readmission process.
- Maintain confidentiality.

j. Registration

Registration information, materials, dates, and final grades can be found in MyWCU. The two data items needed by RN to BSN/RIBN students to enter and register through MyWCU are the student 92 number and password. RIBN students must obtain their registration ALT PIN from their advisor.

k. Appeals Policy for the School of Nursing

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. Information and instructions for filing an appeal may be found in the WCU Undergraduate Catalog, [Academic Action Appeal Policy](#) section.

iii. Expectations of Students

a. 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 WCU Academic Honesty Policy, published in the WCU Undergraduate Catalog. Click on the [Academic Integrity Policy](#) link to review the policy in detail.

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 practicum 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 School of Nursing 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).

Click on the <https://www.wcu.edu/learn/academic-success/tutoring-services/services-resources/writing-support/index.aspx> link for specific guidelines about avoiding plagiarism.

b. Social Media Policy

See Appendix B.

c. Policy on Attendance

Students should refer to the course syllabus for specific attendance requirements. Students should also check each online course for email, discussion postings, announcements, and grades at least every 24 hours.

Students are expected to attend all scheduled learning activities, such as orientation, lectures, seminars, labs, observations, practicum rotations, evaluation, conferences, and other activities as scheduled by faculty. Refer to individual course syllabi for course specific attendance policies. No other activities are to be planned that conflict with scheduled learning activities. The professor must approve any exceptions to the attendance policy in advance.

Learning activities may be scheduled any time within a 24-hour period (including early morning, evening, night shifts, and weekends). Students are responsible for their own transportation to and from all scheduled learning activities. Attendance means arriving prior to the scheduled experience and staying for the duration of the learning experience. Late arrival is disruptive to a class/practicum setting and the faculty member has the option to exclude the student from the learning activity. Students who fail to comply with attendance policies may be issued a failing or unsatisfactory grade for the involved course.

d. 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/practicum setting, the faculty member has the option to exclude the student from the learning activity. Exclusion from class/practicum learning activity due to tardiness results in absence and will be treated as such.

e. Examinations

Students are expected to complete examinations on the scheduled dates. If a student is unable to take a scheduled exam, for whatever reason, she/he must notify the professor of the anticipated absence prior to the exam. Failure to notify the professor may result in a grade of zero for that exam. Faculty will evaluate patterns of missed exams individually. The student must make arrangements to make-up the exam when she/he notifies the professor that the exam cannot be taken 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 a week 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.

f. Core Competencies Necessary for Students to Achieve Program Outcomes

It is the policy of the School of Nursing and the College of Health and Human Sciences to adhere to the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Students admitted to the School of Nursing are expected to be able to complete curriculum requirements which include physical, cognitive, communication and behavioral core competencies that are essential to the functions of the entry level 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 client 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:**
Communication includes speaking, writing, reading, and listening to obtain information, describe changes, and perceive non-verbal communication. A candidate must be able to communicate effectively and sensitively with clients and peers. The applicant must be able to communicate effectively and efficiently in oral and written form with clients, families, peers and other members of the health care team.
- **Motor:**
An applicant should have sufficient motor function to obtain information from clients by palpation, auscultation, percussion, and other assessment techniques. The applicant should be able to execute motor movements required to perform general care and emergency treatment of clients 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 touch and vision senses.
- **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, analysis, synthesis, and practicum reasoning.

Prospective majors who believe they may have difficulty meeting the core competencies in one or more areas are encouraged to contact the School of Nursing for more information. However, students applying for admission to the program are not required to disclose any disability prior to admission.

After students have been admitted to the program, each student will be sent 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. (See student handbook agreement.) This statement will become part of the student's record.

If a student requires accommodation due to a stated disability, the disability must be documented through the Office of Student Support Services for academic disabilities or through the Office for Student Affairs for Section 504/ADA issues. Students need to be aware that the first practicum nursing course will require demonstration of physical mobility skills such as lifting, positioning, and the ability to see and hear, etc. The student is responsible for providing documentation of the disability to the professor and requesting accommodation(s).

Disability Services provides the student with a letter of suggested accommodations that the student gives to the professor. Examples of "reasonable accommodation" might include use of an amplified stethoscope (purchased by the student) or extra time to take a test for a student with dyslexia. If the professor, student, and the Disability Services cannot agree upon "reasonable accommodation", the issue is then taken to the School Director and on to the Associate Dean, if necessary. In each of these steps, the student's right to confidentiality must be protected.

g. Health and Behavioral Competencies

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

Unprofessional conduct may be defined as, but is not limited to:

- 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).
- 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).
- 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 interferes with the learning environment.

If a student is academically sanctioned and/or removed from the learning environment due to a behavioral problem, a conference will then be scheduled to include the student, faculty member, and the Associate Director to discuss the student behavior and retention and/or progression in the program. The conference will be documented in the student file. If the student is dissatisfied with the outcome, he/she may appeal in accordance with the Academic Appeals Procedures.

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 professional practice.

h. 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 practicum 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 practicum 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 Program Director, Associate Director and Director of the School of Nursing will collaborate with the Dean to implement the policy. The policy may be reviewed in its entirety on the [Policies for Students in the College of Health and Human Sciences](#) website. In addition, all students enrolled in the School of Nursing must sign the Acknowledgement and Consent Form located at the back of this handbook. 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.

i. Expected Respectful and Professional Behaviors

Basic to professionalism is maintaining an attitude of *respect* - towards others *and* yourself. Some of the following behavioral policies may only apply to face-to-face classes and practicum and distance learning courses.

- **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.
- **Integrity:** Academic integrity is fundamental and expected of all nursing students; see the handbook for student nurses.
- **Attendance:** Prompt attendance at all learning activities is expected of all students (e.g. synchronous session practicums). Arriving late is disruptive to other students as well as disrespectful to faculty and peers. Please arrive on time to class and remain in until it is over. If an emergency causes you to arrive late, in the back of the room and speak with the professor about the reason for the tardiness after class.
- **Class breaks:** Professors will schedule breaks as appropriate. Please plan bathroom visits and snack times for breaks. Return from breaks promptly.
- **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.
- **Sleeping in class:** Students cannot learn if they are sleeping and it is a tremendous distraction to other students who watch them nod off.
- **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.
- **Guests:** No children, friends, or guests are allowed in the classroom or practicum setting. Only registered WCU students may attend class.
- **Taping:** Taping or recording of class is allowed with the permission of the professor.
- **Course websites:** You should check course websites daily. This is the primary avenue of communication in a distance

learning community. Please be aware that student activity on class web sites can be tracked.

- **Computers:** Laptops or tablet devices may be used in the classroom for taking notes. Games, emailing, Facebooking, social media, and web surfing, etc. are prohibited.
- **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 the activity or course.

Testing Policy

- **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.
- **WCU School of Nursing conducts statistical analyses on all exams.** Based on those analyses, and in consultation with other faculty, items are examined for accuracy, reliability, and fairness.
- **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 preferred telephone number (number is posted in syllabus) and leave a message if he/she is not available. Excused absences may include illness (a note from a health care provider may be required) or death of a family member.
- **Make-ups for quizzes and exams** – please follow the instructions in each syllabus for course policies.
- **During onsite 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.
- **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.
- **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 reserves the right to inspect earplugs.

Expected respectful and professional behaviors:

- Faculty should be addressed by their appropriate titles, e.g. “Professor” or “Dr.,” rather than by their first names.
- 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.
- Do not enter faculty offices when the faculty is not present, or without permission.
- Students should not be in faculty offices during class time.
- Student concerns about an issue should respectfully be addressed to the appropriate faculty member, staff or peer.
- If the issue is not resolved by going to the involved faculty member, follow the chain of command: faculty member, → program director → associate director → school director.
- Respect the role of faculty members as teachers, mentors, and experts in the profession and maintain appropriate boundaries. Faculty desire to see students succeed in school, 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.
- Practicum days and hours vary based on course requirements, practicum sites, and learning objectives.

B. Practicum Information

i. Practicum Documentation Requirements

Pre-requisites must be completed in the semester prior to each practicum block. These requirements are located on Homeplace under Practicum Resources. The student will complete the Practicum Preparation Checklist. All due dates are included on this document (e.g. Step One, Step Two, BLS, health documents). The student is responsible for finding a site and preceptor and obtaining course professor approval prior to submitting Step One. **Failure to submit required documents by the deadlines could result in ineligibility for enrolling in the practicum block and/or dismissal from the program.**

ii. *Basic Life Support – Proof of Completion*

All students must submit current proof of the successful completion of a Basic Life Support for Health Care Providers. 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** (BLS) is required. Some cards expire in 12 months; others are in effect for 24 months. The School of Nursing will abide by the expiration date specified on the card. It is the student's responsibility to maintain a current status. Online courses for BLS (CPR) are *not* accepted.

iii. *Professional Liability (Malpractice) Insurance*

All students in a practicum course are automatically enrolled in the WCU student liability insurance policy at a low cost. Students will be billed for the insurance prior to the first semester and each semester thereafter on the student account.

iv. *OSHA Bloodborne Pathogens and HIPAA Training*

All students must complete Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) training prior to their first practicum semester and then annually thereafter. OSHA/HIPAA assessments are posted in Blackboard RN to BSN Homeplace and RIBN Homeplace.

a. OSHA Bloodborne Pathogens

See Appendix A

b. HIPAA Guidelines

The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 and its implementing regulations restrict WCU students and faculty ability to use and disclose protected health information (PHI).

Protected Health information means information that is created or received by a health care entity and relates to the past, present, or future physical or mental health or condition of a participant; the provision of health care to a participant; and that identifies the participant or for which there is a reasonable basis to believe the information can be used to identify the participant. Protected health information includes information of persons living or deceased.

It is the WCU School of Nursing's policy to comply fully with HIPAA's requirements. To that end, all students, faculty and staff of the WCU School of Nursing who have access to PHI must comply with all HIPAA Privacy Policies within the facilities in

which we provide patient care or participate in learning experiences.

Each student and faculty member will be required to participate in an extensive HIPAA training program prior to starting their initial practicum experiences and annually thereafter.

v. *Student Health Form:* All students in practicum courses must have a completed **School of Nursing Health Form** on file with the School of Nursing. The School of Nursing Health Form must remain current for the time the student is enrolled in the program. The student must inform the program 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. If there is a change in a student's health status while in the program, the student must submit an updated health form or note from a health care provider stating that the student is physically and/or mentally able to continue with school activities as specified in the Core Competencies.

vi. *Immunizations and TB Screening:* Immunizations must remain current through the end of all practicum rotations. Failure to meet these requirements may result in inability to attend practicum activities and dismissal from the program.

These include, but may not be limited to:

- ***Annual Influenza Vaccination***
- ***Hepatitis B vaccination (HBV) series***
- ***Measles, Mumps, Rubella (MMR)***
- ***Tetanus, Diphtheria, and Pertussis (TDaP)***

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 practicum 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 practicum facilities.

Students who have a known allergy to any required vaccine, which prohibits them from receiving it, may request a copy of the WCU School of Nursing Immunization Declination form. This form must be completed by a healthcare provider and submitted, along with all other health records

documentation, by the stated deadlines. Any student completing a practicum or practicum on any Mission Hospitals campus who submits an immunization declination for the influenza vaccination must also be approved by the Mission Hospitals Medical Director of Staff Health Services.

vii. . *Criminal Background and Sanctions Checks*

All nursing students must have criminal background and sanction checks completed upon admission to the nursing program. Student criminal background and sanction checks are required by many of the practicum agencies that partner with the School of Nursing. Students may be required to repeat the checks based on practicum site requirements. Students admitted to any School of Nursing program must complete the process of the checks by deadlines stated in the admission packet. Failure to complete the checks by the stated deadline may jeopardize admission.

Criminal background and sanctions checks are performed by Certiphi® Screening Incorporated, a web-based service (www.certiphi.com). Students initiate the screenings online through the Certiphi® website. The student is responsible for cost of the Certiphi® criminal background and sanctions checks.

Results are reviewed by the Office of the Dean of the College of Health and Human Sciences. Positive findings will be reported to the Director of the School of Nursing and will be reviewed with the student.

Students with previous international residency may result in a delayed criminal background check screening. A delayed receipt of the criminal background check report may result in the postponement of a practicum rotation.

If a practicum agency declines to accept a student based on the result of the criminal background check, the student will not be eligible to complete the practicum course and progress in the program.

viii. *Guidelines for Dress in the Practicum Setting*

- ***Practicum Attire:*** RN to BSN and RIBN student dress in the practicum setting shall be “professional attire”. A WCU practicum ID badge must be worn at all times. A white lab coat with the RIBN patch will be worn in some RIBN practicum settings. A general rule of thumb is to dress like one’s preceptor.
- ***Identification:*** Departmentally approved identification badges are to be worn whenever the student goes into any practicum 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.

Students' Rights and Responsibilities in the Practicum Area

1. Plan activities with the faculty and preceptor to attain identified goals.
2. Confer with the practicum preceptor and faculty when experiences are not conducive to meeting objectives.
3. Complete all requisite evaluations in a timely manner.
4. Arrive in the clinical/practicum area at a time established by each ~~clinical~~/practicum site preceptor, allowing enough time for advance preparation of the clinical/practicum site.
5. Clinical/practicum commitment time is expected to be completed. Professional behavior is expected regarding finishing practicum responsibilities and other assignments as appropriate.
6. Universal Precaution - Each facility has developed specific guidelines and policies regarding blood borne pathogens and universal precautions. All facilities provide and maintain personal protective equipment needed for the practice of universal precautions. The student will review and adhere to each facility's policies while on rotation.
7. Practicum Record - Each student is responsible for the accurate completion of the practicum log required in the course syllabus.
8. Severe Weather Policy
 - a. If the student feels that it is unsafe to travel during a weather emergency, he/she should not attempt and are under no obligation to attend clinical/practicum. The site and Course Instructor should be notified as soon as possible if a practicum experience will be missed.
 - b. It is the student's responsibility to reschedule practicum time that is missed due to inclement weather.
9. Reporting Practicum Events - Any practicum event that results in either a potential or actual adverse patient outcome or threatens patient safety must be documented. The goal is to further educational development regarding the identification and documentation of clinical/practicum events as they pertain to patient safety.

Students are required to report any witnessed injury, breach in patient safety or poor patient outcome in which they are involved. Students must complete the Clinical Event Report form and submit it to the Course Instructor within 48 hours of any unusual event or in the discovery of any unusual event in the practicum area. Faculty may also complete the Clinical Event Report form. The appropriate faculty will review the report. A conference including faculty and the student will be held as needed to address

the practicum event. A serious infraction of patient safety is grounds for possible probation and/or dismissal from the program. The Accident or Injury Report Form ([Appendix C](#)) is also available in Homeplace.

Failure of the student to report an unusual practicum event within 48 hours of the event, or the discovery of the event, to the Course Instructor may result in possible probation and/or dismissal from the program.

NOTE: In the event of a practicum event, the student must notify the preceptor or designee and agency/site.

ix. Student Practicum Evaluations

1. Each student shall be evaluated by the preceptor before the end of the semester.
2. One form should be completed by each preceptor during the semester.
3. Each student is evaluated on his/her performance by the preceptor.
4. Each preceptor/practicum site is evaluated by the student and submitted to the instructor within Blackboard before the end of the semester.
5. Each student will receive a final semester practicum grade of S or U based on course requirements.
6. A student may not progress to the next semester unless they satisfactorily meet the semester's practicum behavioral objectives. A student must receive an overall S grade in the practicum to continue in the program.

III. STUDENT DEVELOPMENT

A. Organizations

Students are encouraged to take advantage of the opportunities to become involved in governance within the School of Nursing, 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. The following organizations are registered with WCU Student Affairs.

i. ***Association of Nursing Students (ANS)*** ANS at Western Carolina University is a pre-professional organization patterned after its parent organization, the American Nurses Association. Students are strongly encouraged to join and participate at the local (WCU ANS), state (NCANS), and national levels (NANS). The purpose of the association is to promote professionalism through leadership opportunities, professional contacts, networking, and applied community service learning. More information is available at <http://www.ncans.org/>.

The WCU ANS is open to all nursing and pre-nursing students. 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.

ii. ***Nurses Christian Fellowship (NCF)*** Nurses Christian Fellowship provides an opportunity for nursing students, faculty, and staff to share spiritual concerns from a Christian perspective. Membership is open to any interested pre-nursing student, nursing student, faculty, or administrator. More information is available at <http://ncf-jcn.org/>.

iii. ***Eta Psi Chapter of Sigma Theta Tau, International Nursing Honor Society*** The purposes of Sigma Theta Tau International are to recognize superior academic 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 pre- licensure, RIBN and RN to BSN students as well as graduate students, and community leaders by invitation. The top 35% of the pre-licensure students are eligible for nomination after completing at least half of their nursing courses. More information is available at www.nursingsociety.org.

B. Committees

i. ***Curriculum Committee (CC)*** The Curriculum Committee is composed of faculty and student representatives. 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.

ii. ***Student Affairs Committee (SAC)*** The Student Affairs Committee is composed of faculty members and student representatives. 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 School of Nursing.

iii. ***School of Nursing Director's Advisory Council (DAC)*** 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 School of Nursing. The representatives meet once a semester with the School of Nursing Director and invited faculty to discuss student issues and goals and to plan School of Nursing events. Students should not hesitate to contact their representative at any time if they have ideas or concerns.

C. Engagement

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

When the School of Nursing 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 School of Nursing, College, and University.

ii. ***Travel Abroad***

Students have the opportunity to participate in many educational and service opportunities abroad. The Office of International Studies lists many trips open to WCU students. In addition, the School of Nursing offers several travel courses and mission travel opportunities each year. Please talk to your advisor if you are interested in travel, contact the Office of International Studies, and watch the Blackboard BSN Homeplace for School of Nursing travel announcements.

D. Scholarships, Loans and Grants

Various financial sources, e.g., work-study, grants, and loans, are available to nursing students. To become eligible, application for financial assistance is made by contacting the WCU Financial Aid Office in person at Killian Annex, by telephone at 828-227-7290, or by email. More information about financial aid options is available at the [WCU Financial Aid Office's website](#). Financial aid recipients are expected to comply with the guidelines established by each specific granting or loaning agency.

i. Scholarships

Students can learn more about scholarship opportunities through WCU by visiting the [ScholarCat](#). 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.

ii. 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.

E. Career Planning

i. WCU's Career Services Center

The WCU 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 Center website](#).

ii. Letters of reference

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. 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.

F. Graduation

i. Commencement

A University Commencement Ceremony (Graduation) is held at the end of the Spring and Fall semesters. The University provides information concerning the graduation ceremonies, rehearsals, ordering caps and gowns to students. Watch your Catamount email for specifics.

ii. Scholastic Status Check (Source: WCU Undergraduate Catalog)

"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".

iii. Filing Application for Diploma (Filing for Graduation)

All students must submit an application for graduation by the dates provided by the Registrar's Office. The application process is completed online through MyWCU. *It is the student's responsibility to initiate and complete the application for graduation process. Students and advisors collaborate to fulfill this important task.*

G. School of Nursing Convocation

A School of Nursing Convocation is planned prior to commencement exercises by the Convocation Committee within the School of Nursing to recognize students who have completed a nursing degree at WCU. 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. Information will be provided about class photographs, School of Nursing pins, convocation invitations, and planning activities.

H. Awards for Graduating Seniors

The School of Nursing recognizes outstanding graduates through a variety of awards presented at the School of Nursing Convocation and at the College of Health and Human Sciences awards ceremony. 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 School of Nursing; contact the School of Nursing Director to make arrangements.

i. The Deitz Outstanding Student Award These awards honoring Dr. Vivian Deitz, Head of the School of Nursing from 1988 through 1996, are presented to a pre-licensure, RN to BSN and MSN graduate or alumna who have demonstrated outstanding qualities as a student.

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

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

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

I. 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 School of Nursing and to support the School's current students and special projects. Please join the School of Nursing Alumni Association prior to your graduation.

IV. APPENDICIES

Appendix A

WCU BLOODBORNE PATHOGEN

Exposure Control Plan

The following Exposure Control Plan (ECP) has been developed to eliminate or minimize student exposure to bloodborne pathogens. This plan addresses all of the provisions of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's (OSHA) Occupational Exposure to Bloodborne Pathogens Standard (29CFR 1910.1030), and is implemented by the Office of Safety and Risk Management. All faculty, staff, and students must complete annual exposure training. 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.

Scope: Blood and body fluid precautions must be used by all students who come in contact with any human blood, body fluid, or other potentially infectious materials.

Rationale:

- According to OSHA, Universal Precautions are defined as the infection control practices in which all human blood and certain human body fluids are treated as though they are known to be infectious for bloodborne pathogens. The Universal Precaution approach is based on the premise that many people do not know that they are infected and that medical history and examination cannot reliably identify all people infected with bloodborne pathogens.
- OSHA mandates that Universal Precautions shall be observed to prevent contact with blood or other potentially infectious materials.
- WCU students should consider all human blood and body fluids as potentially infectious and must employ appropriate protective measures to prevent possible exposures. All body fluids are included, not just those that appear bloody. Blood is not always visible in body fluids or is not recognized until an exposure has occurred.
- Western Carolina University also includes the following under “other potentially infectious materials”: Any unfixed human tissues or organs, HIV-, HBV-, or HCV-containing cell lines, any animals or animal tissues infected with these pathogens, all primary human cell lines, and any established human cell lines. All human cell lines (including established lines) are also included in the definition of “other potentially infectious materials.” Exposure Risk Determination Exposure risk is determined by reviewing employee positions for reasonably anticipated risk of occupational exposure to human blood, body fluids, or other potentially infectious materials (OPIMs) as defined by the Bloodborne Pathogens Standard and OSHA interpretations as follows:
 1. Occupational Exposure Risk is “reasonably anticipated skin, eye, mucous membrane, non-intact skin, or parenteral contact with blood and other potentially infectious materials that may result from the performance of an employee’s duties.”
 2. Other Potentially Infectious Materials are any unfixed tissue or organ (other than intact skin) from a human (living or dead); including primary and established human cell lines and HIV containing cell or tissue cultures, organ culture medium or other solutions, and blood, organs, or other tissues from experimental animals infected with

HIV, HBV, or HCV.

1) Standard Safe Work Practices

- i) Eating, drinking, smoking (including electronic cigarettes), applying cosmetics, and handling contact lenses are prohibited in work areas where there is potential for occupational exposure to blood or OPIM.
- ii) Food and drink shall not be stored in work areas where blood or OPIM are present.
- iii) Procedures involving blood or OPIM are to be performed in a manner to minimize splashing, spraying, spattering, and droplet generation.
- iv) Mouth pipetting is prohibited. Always use mechanical means to pipette.
- v) 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.
- vi) 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.

2) Puncture Precautions

- i) All students must take precautions to prevent injuries when using sharp instruments or devices during procedures; when cleaning used instruments; during disposal of used needles and sharps; and when handling sharp instruments after procedures.
- ii) All students must be trained on the availability and use of approved safety devices where appropriate for their work responsibilities.
- iii) Needles must not be recapped, purposely bent or broken, removed from disposable syringes, or otherwise manipulated by hand. Exceptions (such as when needles must be recapped for sterility, i.e., re-use of needle on the same patient) for specific procedures must be approved by the Safety Office. Any approved recapping procedures must be done either by using a recapping device or a one-handed scoop method for recapping.
- iv) Broken, contaminated glassware must not be handled directly with hands, but must be cleaned up by mechanical devices such as a dustpan, cardboard, or tongs.
- v) After use, disposable syringes and needles, scalpel blades, scissors, slides, any activated or inactivated safety devices, and other sharp items must immediately, or as soon as feasible, be placed in puncture-resistant containers for disposal by the sharps user.
- vi) The puncture-resistant containers must be located as close as practical to areas where disposable needles or sharps are used. The needle disposal containers are to be replaced before they become full.

3) Hand/Skin Washing

- i) Hands and other skin surfaces must be washed as soon as possible if they become contaminated with blood or body fluids.
- ii) Hands must be washed immediately after removing gloves, and before

leaving the laboratory/work area.

Barrier Precautions (Personal Protective Equipment)

- i.) Students must use appropriate barrier precautions to prevent skin and mucous membrane exposure when contact with any blood or other body fluids is anticipated. During clinical and lab, the faculty and student will assess the exposure potential from procedures to be performed and identify all procedures which necessitate routine use of personal protective equipment because of a probability of exposure. In addition, each student should critically review their work responsibilities to make informed decisions regarding the appropriate use of personal protective equipment.
- ii) Gloves must be worn for touching blood or body fluids, mucous membranes, or non-intact skin of all patients, for handling items or surfaces soiled with blood and body fluids, and for performing venipuncture and other vascular access procedures.
- iii) Masks and protective eyewear or face shields must be worn to prevent exposure of mucous membranes of the mouth, nose, and eyes during procedures that are likely to generate splashes or splatters of blood or other body fluids.
- iv) Appropriate protective gowns or aprons must be worn during procedures that are likely to generate splashes of blood or other body fluids. For procedures during which you anticipate your clothing will be soaked, fluid resistant aprons or gowns must be worn.
- v) Shoe covers or boots must be worn in instances where gross contamination with blood/body fluids is reasonably anticipated (i.e. sewage spill).

Post Exposure Evaluation and Follow-up: Significant exposure includes contamination by blood or other body fluids or high titers of cell-associated or free virus via

- 1) percutaneous, e.g., needlestick
- 2) permucosal, e.g., splash in eye or mouth; or
- 3) cutaneous exposure, e.g., non-intact skin, or involving large amounts of blood or prolonged contact with blood, especially when exposed skin is chapped, abraded, or afflicted with dermatitis.

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 clinical faculty, WCU Safety Officer, and the SON Director notified as soon as feasible by the faculty member for either student or faculty member exposure. The student and faculty member should 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 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 or the WCU Health Services. 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.
3. Any incident involving a student, should be report to the agency/facility liaison where the incident occurred. Faculty will work with the agency/facility liaison to complete any agency/facility required documentation related to the incident.

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.
4. 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.
5. Post-exposure prophylaxis should be administered when medically indicated.

6. Counseling on the immediate and long term effects of potential infectious agents should be discussed with the exposed individual.
7. 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.
8. 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.
9. Records should be maintained by the medical evaluator for 30 years following the completion of the evaluation.

This policy is from [WCU Biological Safety Manual – Office of Safety and Risk Management](#), Section 9 modified for students in the school of nursing.

Appendix B

Social Media Guidelines

Purpose:

The School of Nursing supports the use of social media for the purpose of engaging in professional and personal communication between the University, other students, prospective students, faculty, and staff. These WCU School of Nursing guidelines apply to anyone who engages in internet conversations for school-related purposes or school-related activities such as interactions in or about clinical and didactic course activities. Dissemination of sensitive and confidential information, which is protected under Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) of 1996, whether discussed through traditional communication channels or through social media is prohibited outside the appropriate setting. Our goal is to ensure that all participation online is respectful and upholds the mission, vision, and values of Western Carolina University and the School of Nursing.

Definitions:

Social media is defined as mechanisms for communication that allows for the creation and exchange of user-generated content, which is disseminated through social interaction, using various platforms that are immediately searchable and shareable. So, remember when publishing information on social media sites to remain cognizant that the information is available for anyone to see and can be traced back to you.

Social media is defined as, but not limited to, web-based or mobile technologies used for interactive communication. Examples include but are not limited to:

- Social networking sites – Facebook, MySpace, LinkedIn, Tumblr, blogs, podcasts and RSS feeds
- Photo-sharing and video websites – YouTube, Flickr
- Micro-blogging sites – Twitter, Yammer
- Forums and discussion boards – Yahoo! Groups or Google Groups

Guidelines:

- Do not post confidential or proprietary information about the university, staff, students, clinical facilities, patients/clients, or others with whom one has contact in the role of a WCU School of Nursing student.
- Students are not to use ethnic slurs, personal insults, obscenity, pornographic images, or engage in any conduct that would not be acceptable in the professional workplace.
- No student shall videotape professors or fellow students for personal or social media use without the express written permission of the faculty or fellow student. Patients/clients are **not** to be videotaped or photographed without **written** permission of the patient/client **and** of the facility.

- Respect copyright and fair use. When posting, be mindful of the copyright and intellectual property rights of others and of the university. For guidance, visit the University's Library or Copyright Office sites.
- Do not use WCU or the School of Nursing logos and/or graphics, on personal social media sites. Do not use WCU's name to promote a product, cause, or political party or candidate.
- Use of the School of Nursing marks (logos and graphics) for School sanctioned events must be approved (posters, fliers, postings) by administration.
- The use of iPhones and other devices employed for social media will be used only as authorized by faculty.
- No personal phone conversations or texting are allowed while in patient/client areas or in the classroom. If the student needs to respond to an emergency text or phone call during class or practicum, the student is asked to leave the classroom/clinical area to take the call.
- Use of computers (IPads, Notebooks, etc.) during class shall be restricted to note taking and classroom activities.
- If you identify yourself as a WCU student, ensure your profile and related content is consistent with the professional behavioral expectations of the University and the School of Nursing. Identify your views as your own. When posting your point of view, the student needs to ensure that it is clear that they are not speaking for WCU, unless you have been authorized to do so in writing.
- Ultimately, the student is solely responsible for what he/she posts. Be smart about protecting yourself, and others' privacy, and confidential information, especially in regards to HIPAA. You are legally liable for what you post and remember individual bloggers have been held liable by the courts for comments made on social media sites that were proprietary, defamatory, libelous, obscene or copyrighted.

Consequences:

- All violations by students of patient/client privacy with an electronic device will be subject to HIPAA procedures/guidelines and consequences.
- Other social media violations in which students share confidential or unprofessional information will be reviewed by the Student Affairs Committee and may result in disciplinary action and/or dismissal from the program.

- Each student is legally responsible for individual postings and may be subject to liability if individual postings are found defamatory, harassing, or in violation of any other applicable law as well as any copyrighted information (music, videos, text, etc.).

Related references:

- [NCSBN Resources](#)
- [HIPAA](#)
- [WCU Career Services Social Media Information](#)

Appendix C
College of Health and Human Sciences
Accident/Incident Report Form

Date of Accident/Incident: _____ **Time:** _____ AM/PM

Location of Accident/Injury: Bldg: _____ **Room:** _____ **Course:** _____ **Sec:** _____

Name of Injured Person: _____

Phone Number: _____ **92#:** _____

Relationship to University: Student Visitor Faculty Staff

Name(s) and Telephone(s) of witness(es): _____

Nature of Incident (circle one):

Burn Cut / Laceration Chemical Burn Possible Fracture
Sprain / Strain Inhalation Loss of Consciousness / Fainting Other _____

Description / Location of Injury: _____

Briefly describe how injury occurred.

Action Taken (circle all appropriate responses)

Treatment / First Aid Provided Referred to Health Services Referred to Physician
Referred to Hospital Emergency Transport to Hospital Refused Treatment

Immediate Care Provided by: _____

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____
Reporting Employee

Printed Name: _____
Reporting Employee

Department Head: Date Report Received: _____ Initials: _____

Recommendations:

CHHS Dean's Office: Date Received: _

Send copy to Safety and Risk Management – Attn: Steve Flurry – Facilities Management

Student Accident Report Form

An ***accident report form*** must be completed in the event an incident occurs in which there is an injury or accident. The accident report form is to be used for students, staff, faculty, or visitors who are involved in an accident on Western Carolina University's campus or other WCU owned property or in connection with WCU courses.

The accident report forms may be found by going in line to the University Office of Safety and Risk Management or calling.

A form should be completed at the time of the accident or as soon as possible by the instructor. The form then should be forwarded to the department head. Completed forms will be filed in the Office of Safety and Risk Management.

**V. COLLEGE OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SCIENCES & POST-LICENSURE
NURSING STUDENT HANDBOOK AGREEMENT AND CONSENT FORM**

College of Health and Human Sciences Acknowledgement and Consent: 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 practicum 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 practicum 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 Name

Student Signature

Date

Undergraduate Post-Licensure Nursing Student Handbook Agreement: I acknowledge that I have received and read the Post-Licensure Nursing Student Handbook for Nursing Majors and understand that I am responsible for adhering to the current policies outlined therein and any policy changes and/or updates in subsequent editions.

Student Name

Student Signature

Date

*This contract will be filed in the student's School of Nursing
academic folder after it is signed and dated.*

Appendix D
Academic Warning Form
Western Carolina University
RN to BSN Nursing Program

Academic Warning

Student:

Course:

Term:

I have been informed by faculty that as of _____ my performance is:
(Date)

Didactic: Grade:
Clinical: Grade:

Assignment	Due Date	Status

Recommendations by faculty for improvement:

Student (electronic signature): _____ Date _____

Faculty (electronic signature): _____ Date _____

Copy of completed form to:

1.) Student File 2.) Program Director 3.) Course Instructor