Pre-Licensure Nursing Student Handbook

2016-2017

Supplemental
to
WCU Undergraduate Catalog
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WELCOME

Welcome to the School of Nursing at Western Carolina University. As you pursue a bachelor’s degree in nursing, please know that the faculty at WCU is committed to your success. Your course work is just a small fraction of the knowledge you need to excel within your professional career. It is up to you to go beyond that course work by immersing yourself in the professional literature, seeking new and challenging learning experiences, becoming involved in your student and professional organizations, and taking advantage of opportunities to become involved in the community.

This handbook contains important information about the nursing program at Western Carolina University. The School of Nursing policies and procedures here are to be used in concert with University requirements, policies, and procedures. In addition, the handbook contains other useful information such as suggestions for coping with the stress of being in the pre-licensure nursing program.

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

Sharon Metcalfe, EdD, RN  
Interim Director of the School of Nursing  
metcalfe@wcu.edu

Instructions to Students concerning the Pre-Licensure Nursing Student Handbook

All students in the nursing program are responsible for reading and understanding the information contained in the Pre-Licensure Nursing Student Handbook and adhering to any policy changes and/or updates in subsequent editions. Each student must read the Pre-Licensure Nursing 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 Forms & Guides website and in Blackboard BSN 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 the catalog at their level and refer to it for guidance. The catalog is available online at http://catalog.wcu.edu/.

B. Introduction to the School of Nursing

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

The 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 2009 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 AB Tech 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 program jointly with UNC Charlotte.
The School now has well over 2000 alumni who practice in clinical 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 clinical experiences throughout western North Carolina in many different types of health care institutions and agencies. A strong element of our programs is that we offer clinical 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 Pre-licensure Baccalaureate Nursing Program

The Pre-licensure BSN program leads to a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) degree. Upon graduation, pre-licensure students sit for the National Council of State Boards of Nursing licensure examination for registered nurses (NCLEX-RN). Didactic classes are conducted in Cullowhee for traditional pre-licensure students, and clinical nursing experiences are held at health care agencies throughout western North Carolina.

The Accelerated Entry Option Bachelors of Science in Nursing (ABSN) enables candidates already holding a baccalaureate or higher degree to complete the requirements for the BSN program over a shorter time-span. Didactic classes for the Accelerated Entry Option are held at Biltmore Park in Asheville, and clinical nursing experiences are held at health care agencies throughout western North Carolina.
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 SON 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.

01/10/2013
### F. BSN Program Student Learning Outcomes by Semester

#### SEMESTER ONE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communicating Outcome</th>
<th>Nursing Reasoning Outcome</th>
<th>Collaborating Outcome</th>
<th>Professional Valuing Outcome</th>
<th>Managing Information Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>...is the student able to apply principles of therapeutic communication with individuals? Is the student able to demonstrate beginning professional oral and written communication?</td>
<td>...is the student beginning to use elements and standards of reasoning within the nursing process?</td>
<td>...is the student able to collaborate in a goal-directed manner when performing nursing care and working with other healthcare providers?</td>
<td>...is the student able to recognize the need to incorporate professional nursing values?</td>
<td>...is the student able to access data and information from print, electronic, and other sources?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Critical Elements:

**Communicating Outcome**
- Utilizes criteria for therapeutic communication
- Demonstrates effective writing skills
- Employs effective oral skills in obtaining and presenting pertinent information
- Begins to use professional communication in interactions with members of the healthcare team
- Begins to develop therapeutic relationships with clients for the purpose of providing safe and effective nursing care
- Recognizes professional boundaries with patients, families, and other caregivers

**Nursing Reasoning Outcome**
- Identifies processes that facilitate safety and decrease errors in patient care
- Demonstrates self-awareness by clarifying biases, inclinations, strengths, and limitations
- Recognizes the impact of attitudes, values, and personal bias on the care of the very young, frail elderly, and other vulnerable populations
- Identifies and begins to apply standards of critical thinking
- Assesses the health and healthcare needs of individuals
- Recognizes own limitations in nursing knowledge and skills and seeks help as needed
- Applies standards of professional practice in the delivery of safe patient care

**Collaborating Outcome**
- Recognizes the physical, social and cultural influences affecting interactions
- Define appropriate process of delegation
- Identifies roles and behaviors of groups and group process
- Fosters positive, caring, & respectful collaborative relationships
- Recognizes issues of power and conflict in relationships with patients, peers, and other healthcare providers
- Articulates various conflict resolution strategies

**Professional Valuing Outcome**
- Identifies the social significance and professional values of the nursing profession
- Demonstrates respect for human diversity in planning and performing nursing care
- Identifies own learning needs and ways to promote academic success
- Accepts responsibility for self-directed learning
- Demonstrates responsibility and accountability within defined role
- Participates in professional activities

**Managing Information Outcome**
- Identifies reliable resources for data and information
- Uses technology to access data and information
- Uses clinical information systems (CIS) to document patient care
- Identifies ethical issues related to data security, confidentiality, and the patient’s right to privacy
- Demonstrates proficient computer skills
**SEMESTER TWO**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communicating Outcome</th>
<th>Nursing Reasoning Outcome</th>
<th>Collaborating Outcome</th>
<th>Professional Valuing Outcome</th>
<th>Managing Information Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>...is the student able to apply therapeutic and professional communication effectively with individuals and groups?</td>
<td>...is the student able to use reasoning elements to make accurate patient care decisions?</td>
<td>...is the student able to work with others to listen, build on ideas, and contribute to mutually agreed-upon patient goals?</td>
<td>...is the student able to apply values of professional nursing?</td>
<td>...is the student able to utilize data and information through information management skills?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Critical Elements:**
- Utilizes appropriate communication techniques to obtain information for planning, implementing and evaluating safe nursing care
- Utilizes various modes of communication in professional nursing interactions
- Demonstrates appropriate documentation of nursing assessments, interventions, and evaluations in a timely and accurate manner
- Applies professional communication skills in interactions with members of the healthcare team

**Critical Elements:**
- Employs safe judgments based on context
- Analyzes own critical thinking using identified standards
- Identifies priorities and manages time to provide safe patient care
- Begins to incorporate evidence-based nursing practice in the delivery of care
- Actively seeks learning opportunities
- Explains the interrelationships among theory, practice, and research

**Critical Elements:**
- Participates in teamwork among peers and healthcare providers
- Demonstrates ability to provide and receive constructive feedback
- Demonstrates effective collaborative behavior with individuals and groups
- Recognizes and accepts appropriate delegation
- Recognizes conflicts and identifies ways to resolve conflict

**Critical Elements:**
- Demonstrates appreciation of human differences and adapts accordingly
- Incorporates respect and value of diversity in quality patient-centered care
- Identifies ethical dilemmas and applies principles/theories for ethical decision making
- Identifies political processes that enhance healthcare and the advancement of the profession
- Recognizes the importance of lifelong learning to professional practice
- Demonstrates accountability to the profession of nursing

**Critical Elements:**
- Obtains relevant data and information as a learner of professional nursing practice
- Inputs, organizes, annotates, and stores data and information
- Utilizes data and information to address professional issues
- Evaluates the credibility of sources of information, including data bases and the internet
- Explains the importance of evidence-based knowledge to ensure patient safety and improve patient outcomes
## Semester Three

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communicating Outcome</th>
<th>Nursing Reasoning Outcome</th>
<th>Collaborating Outcome</th>
<th>Professional Valuing Outcome</th>
<th>Managing Information Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>...is the student able to analyze communication of self and others?</td>
<td>...is the student able to continue towards independence in using reasoning to make accurate patient care decisions?</td>
<td>...is the student able to interact effectively based on the developmental level of individuals and groups?</td>
<td>...is the student able to consistently demonstrate ethically grounded behaviors reflective of professional nursing practice?</td>
<td>...is the student able to appraise the appropriate use of data and information for providing individual and aggregate care?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Critical Elements:
- **Analyzes application of therapeutic and professional communication skills in the delivery of safe patient care**
- **Compares and contrasts communication approaches based on interpretation of communication barriers**
- **Demonstrates insight into the relationship between effective communication and professional empowerment**

### Critical Elements:
- **Analyzes own reasoning in multiple patient solutions**
- **Recommends and/or implements solutions that are logically developed, context specific, and theory based**
- **Identifies evidence-based practices to provide health teaching, counseling, screening, referral, and follow-up**
- **Uses clinical judgment to anticipate consequences of nursing interventions**

### Critical Elements:
- **Collaborates as a member of the healthcare team**
- **Delegates and accepts appropriate tasks**
- **Uses collaboration to develop an intervention plan to support health and prevent illness among individuals, families, and communities**
- **Establishes empowered partnerships with individuals and groups**

### Critical Elements:
- **Integrates professional role in relation to other healthcare providers**
- **Analyzes impact of sociopolitical issues on professional practice**
- **Applies nursing values in the context of clinical ethical dilemmas**
- **Analyzes the impact of healthcare disparities among diverse populations**
- **Explores role as a change agent in health care policy and practice**

### Critical Elements:
- **Applies standards for managing data and information**
- **Accesses and selectively implements evidence-based information in planning professional nursing care**
- **Demonstrates competence in the use of CIS, communication devices, and patient care technology to provide safe and effective care**
- **Appraises the impact of telecommunication technology on healthcare communication**
- **Uses CIS to benchmark sensitive nursing outcomes**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communicating Outcome</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>...is the student able to integrate communication into professional nursing practice involving individuals, groups, and collective humanity?</td>
<td>...is the student able to use reasoning to make independent clinical judgments in nursing practice?</td>
<td>...is the student able to adopt an individual, evidence-based collaborative style as a professional nurse?</td>
<td>...is the student able to critique self in relation to professional role and ethics?</td>
<td>...is the student able to make clinical judgments through the management of technology and information systems?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Critical Elements:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Critical Elements:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Critical Elements:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Critical Elements:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Critical Elements:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incorporates effective oral and written communication skills into own professional nursing practice</td>
<td>Analyzes own reasoning in multiple contexts and considers the setting and patient population</td>
<td>Develops creative strategies to enable systems to change</td>
<td>Analyzes ethical issues and takes appropriate action</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engages actively in goal-directed Inter- and Intraprofessional communication</td>
<td>Makes judgments about the effectiveness of nursing interventions and the achievement of outcomes based on logic and intuition</td>
<td>Applies leadership concepts, skills, and decision making in the provision of high-quality patient care</td>
<td>Incorporates cultural competence into clinical practice</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilizes effective oral and/or written communication skills to convey or receive performance evaluation</td>
<td>Incorporates effective management of human and physical resources into nursing practice</td>
<td>Demonstrates appropriate delegation</td>
<td>Synthesizes ethical, legal, and professional standards integral to the practice of professional nursing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Applies evidence-based practices to provide health teaching, counseling, screening, disease and outbreak investigation, referral, and follow-up</td>
<td>Employs appropriate conflict resolution strategies</td>
<td>Develops a plan for life-long learning, professional engagement, and continued competence for nursing practice and career development</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Creates learning opportunities for self and others</td>
<td>Creates partnerships with patients and other healthcare professionals through collaboration for the purpose of delivering evidence-based, patient-centered care</td>
<td>Uses Quality Improvement principles to enhance the delivery of healthcare</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
II. EDUCATIONAL POLICIES, PROCEDURES, AND INFORMATION

The Pre-Licensure Nursing Student Handbook is available on the SON Website and must be downloaded and read by the student. The student is responsible for following the SON policies as presented in this document.

As noted in the WCU Undergraduate Catalog, the SON reserves the right to modify school policies and procedures. Students must periodically consult their nursing faculty advisor to obtain current information. The SON will make every effort to notify currently enrolled majors of any changes. Changes and updates to student information will be posted on the SON 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. Admission to the Upper Division
For information see School of Nursing website.

Students currently enrolled in, or who have accepted a seat in, a WCU SON pre licensure degree program may not apply for admission to a parallel WCU SON program (example: a student may not apply to the traditional BSN program while enrolled in the Accelerated BSN program).

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

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

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

c. Credit by Examination
Credit by examination is another option for students wishing to “place out” of upper-division nursing courses. The SON 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.

d. Progression in the Major
The School of Nursing academic and clinical competency requirements assure that graduates of the program have demonstrated the knowledge and behavioral competencies required to provide safe and effective patient care. A pre-licensure nursing major must pass with a grade of Satisfactory or a C (2.00) or better in all required courses in sequence (as indicated in curriculum plans) and demonstrate professional and safe nursing practice. Students who fail to meet these retention standards will be dismissed from the upper-division nursing major. See readmission procedures below.

Students are expected to maintain a running calculation of their status as exam and paper grades accumulate. Students who find themselves in danger of falling below the standards should consult with their academic advisors about their weaknesses and available resources. Students who find it necessary to withdraw from a course or from the University are responsible for following procedures in the WCU 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.

e. Readmission to the Major
Pre licensure students in good academic standing may apply for readmission to the program. If a vacant seat is available for the semester in which the student seeks to return, the student in good academic standing will be given preference over any students who seek readmission after failing a course. Students who have failed (earned a course grade less than C) for two or more nursing courses are not eligible for readmission to the major.

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

Students applying for re-entry into semesters two, three, or four are required to submit a written request for readmission to the chairperson of the School of Nursing Pre-Licensure Student Affairs Committee. Approval for re-admission to semesters two, three or four is granted by the committee, acting as the program Admissions Committee. There is an abbreviated application form. The written request for readmission should include an analysis of why the student did not progress as well as a plan for success that 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. Students who fail a course with a clinical component, or fail pharmacology, will be required to retake the corresponding clinical course when they repeat the failed course. Students who fail a clinical course must retake the corresponding didactic course when they repeat the failed clinical course.

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

The deadlines for receipt of the application for readmission and faculty letters of support are June 1 for fall readmission, October 15 for spring re-entry, and March 15 for summer re-entry. Readmission decisions will not be made until after the deadline. Approval of the application for readmission does not guarantee re-entry at the beginning of the next
scheduled semester; re-entry is based on availability of a seat in the program. The application is available from the School of Nursing’s Office of Student Services.

Students who are granted readmission must repeat program entrance requirements, as directed by the School of Nursing Office of Student Services. Students must submit updated documents by the appropriate deadlines to remain eligible for readmission.

**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. 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 which can be found at [http://catalog.wcu.edu/](http://catalog.wcu.edu/) and the behaviors expected of WCU students, see pg. 20 item iii. Expectations of Students in this handbook.

*b. Lockers*

When lockers or similar personal storage spaces are available, the SON may make them accessible to students. Access may be granted either on an assigned basis or as first come-first served. All such storage spaces remain the property of the School of Nursing. The SON reserves the right to inspect the contents of such storage spaces. Students should be aware that this right includes removal of any personal locking devices and that the SON is not responsible for damage to personal locking devices, which may occur during inspection of the storage space.

*c. Grading Standards*

The SON uses a standard grading scale for all non-clinical BSN courses taught in the major:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>98 – 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93 – 97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>91 – 92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>88 – 90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>85 – 87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>83 – 84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>80 – 82</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>77 – 79</td>
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<td>C-</td>
<td>75 – 76</td>
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<td>D+</td>
<td>72 – 74</td>
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<td>D</td>
<td>69 – 71</td>
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<td>67 – 68</td>
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It is a SON practice to round up the final course grade when the first number to the right of the decimal point is a 5 or higher; e.g., 90.5 is an A-, but 90.49 is a B+. Clinical courses and independent study are graded Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory.

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

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.

d. Standardized Testing Program
Students enrolled in the pre-licensure BSN programs are required to participate in a proprietary RN-NCLEX preparation/standardized testing program selected by faculty. Failure to participate in this program will result in failure to progress in the nursing major. Proctored assessment examinations are administered periodically throughout the program.

e. Laptop Requirement
Students are required to have a laptop computer for use throughout the nursing program. Students will complete all testing online and may be required to use the laptop in class regularly.

f. 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 upon admission and every fall semester through the WCU bookstore. Students are responsible for insuring that their computers are up-to-date and compatible with the software.

g. 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 SON is the most current edition of the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association.

h. Penalties
Grade penalties are outlined in the Attendance Policy and in the criteria for each paper. All papers have a due date and time. Work handed in after the deadline will lose a minimum of 5% for each calendar day (including weekends) that it is late. In courses graded S/U all written work must be submitted to the satisfaction of the professor or the student will receive a grade of U in the course.

i. Dosage Calculation Exams
Accurate calculation of medication dosages is a critical nursing skill and is essential for patient safety. Nursing courses may include required medication dosage calculation examinations (Med Math Exams). All students must demonstrate mastery in calculation of medication dosages.
on these exams. Students are permitted a maximum of two attempts to achieve a passing score. The minimum passing score is 90%. Failure to achieve a passing score by completion of the second attempt will result in grade of unsatisfactory for the course and failure to progress in the major. Students will be notified in advance of the dates the exams will be administered. Specific criteria and guidelines will be provided in each respective course syllabus.

j. Faculty Office Hours
Individual faculty will post office hours during each semester. Appointments are available during office hours and at other times as arranged with the faculty member.

k. Advising
The Office of Student Services will assign each pre-licensure student a nursing faculty advisor. Each student should make an appointment to see the advisor before registration and whenever assistance is needed. For most advisees, appointments should be scheduled during the 9-month academic year.

Please note: The ultimate responsibility for choosing classes, dropping classes, and meeting curriculum and graduation requirements 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.
- contact the assigned advisor to schedule an appointment, especially during early registration.
- do preliminary planning and course selection prior to the advisor appointment; the later the registration date, the more options in courses and sections should be prepared.
- fill out forms completely and accurately.
- make final course selection and do course scheduling after having consulted with your advisor.
- let the advisor know if major problems are expected or encountered (not just a section change).
- keep the advisor informed about academic difficulties AS THEY OCCUR.
- ask about changing advisors if the assigned advisor is not meeting the student’s needs.
- Complete evaluation of the advising process and advisor

The Nursing Faculty Advisor is expected to:
- post and keep office hours, including expanded schedules for early registration.
- help the student find answers to questions regarding Liberal Studies and major requirements.
know about university resources and make referrals as needed.
• sign completed university registration forms.
• assist students with identifying campus resources, and understanding academic polices such as the grade point average, effect of repeats and withdrawals, probation status, and the readmission process.
• maintain confidentiality.
• assist students in exploring alternative academic and career options as indicated.

l. Registration
Dates, materials, and instructions for pre-registration are published in the WCU Undergraduate Catalog and the Class Schedule that is available in late October and February. You may obtain your access number (“alt pin”) to register only by scheduling an advisement appointment with your advisor.

m. 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 Western Carolina University Academic Honesty Policy, published in the WCU Undergraduate Catalog. Click on the Academic Integrity Policy link to view the University’s 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 clinical course, to failure of the entire course and immediate dismissal from the program. Circumstances of the act of academic
dishonesty and consequent sanctions will be documented in the student’s academic file and reported to the SON Director in accordance with WCU policy.

Examples of academic dishonesty:

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

Specific guidelines about avoiding plagiarism are available through WCU’s Plagiarism Resources website.

b. Social Media Policy

See Appendix B.

c. Policy on Attendance

Students are expected to attend all scheduled learning activities, such as orientation, lectures, seminars, labs, observations, clinical 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. All absences from scheduled clinical experiences require communication with the clinical faculty to arrange for a make-up assignment. The absence will be documented in the student’s clinical evaluation tool.

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/clinical 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.
Students who do not complete assigned preparation for clinical have committed a safety violation, which is considered unsatisfactory performance.

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

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, in consultation with the Associate Director and respective Program Director 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 that 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 clinical 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 clinical 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, Director and Program Director to discuss the student behavior and retention and/or progression in the program. The conference will be documented in the student file.

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 acceptance to the Nursing major, when required by clinical agencies, and when there is reasonable suspicion of drug and/or alcohol abuse on the part of a student. Students who exhibit chemically impaired behavior in the classroom or clinical
setting, or who violate state or federal law governing alcohol and drugs, will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal from the Program. The 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 theAcknowledgement 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

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

**Expected classroom behaviors:**

- **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.
- **Integrity:** Academic integrity is fundamental and expected of all nursing students; see the University’s Academic Integrity Policy for details.
- **Attendance:** Prompt attendance at all learning activities is expected of all students. Arriving late to class is disruptive to other students as well as disrespectful to faculty and peers. Please arrive on time to class and remain in class until it is over. If an emergency causes you to arrive late, speak with the professor about the reason for the tardiness after class. Unannounced quizzes can be expected in any class at any time. There will be no opportunity given to make up missed unannounced quizzes in cases of unexcused tardiness or missed 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 notice a student sleeping.

- **Electronic Devices**: Electronic devices may be used for class activities as directed by faculty. Texting or talking on cell phones and the use of lap top computers for use other than class activities during class is prohibited. You will not be permitted to use any electronic device except your laptop during exams.

- **Guests**: No children, friends, or guests are allowed in the classroom or clinical setting. Only registered WCU students may attend class.

- **Taping**: Taping or recording of class is allowed with the permission of the professor.

- **Class Learning Management Systems and MyWCU Email**: You should check both the class learning management system (Blackboard or the equivalent) and WCU email daily. Faculty may post announcements and special assignments for class, or other class reminders in these places. If a class must be cancelled or postponed, it will be posted on the class Learning Management System and / or via MyWCU email. Please be aware that student activity on class Learning Management System sites may be tracked for completion.

- **Computers**: Laptops or tablet devices may be used in the classroom for taking notes. Use of the computer for any issue other than note taking is prohibited. Students must have a functioning laptop computer for all SON courses. Students should ensure that laptops meet all technical requirements for outside vendors that are required for the class.

- **Our Responsibility**: Faculty takes 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 may dismiss you from class.

### Testing policy

- **During testing, no personal items are allowed on the desk or table**: This includes backpacks, notebooks, food and drink items, cell phones, and jackets. Ball caps or other hats with bills are not allowed during exams. If a student removes a layer of clothing, it is to be placed on the back of the chair, not in the student’s lap. Faculty reserves 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 quietly**: 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.

- **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 SON conducts statistical analyses on all exams.** Based on those analyses, and in consultation with other faculty, items are examined for accuracy, reliability, and fairness.

- **You must notify faculty (the course instructor 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). 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** in the SON are allowed for excused absences only. Make ups must be scheduled within one week of the missed exam/quiz with the professor of record. It is the student’s responsibility to contact the involved faculty and schedule the makeup. Make up exams may be in an alternate format from the original exam.

- **ExamSoft:** The School of Nursing utilizes ExamSoft, an online testing program, for all exams. Students are **required** to purchase ExamSoft through the WCU bookstore. Specific directions about how to do that are posted on the Blackboard BSN & ABSN Nursing Homeplace.

- The exams that are given in this course are proctored without the use of outside materials, peer assistance, or the Internet. If the exam is compromised through student dishonesty via cheating, test production and/or distribution, the students involved will be held to the standards of integrity as outlined in the Student Handbook for Nursing Majors. The Instructor of Record in this course reserves the right to dismiss any student involved in the offense from the course, which will result in dismissal from the School of Nursing. Please be aware that the faculty are able to track student use online via the ExamSoft product during a testing situation.

**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.

- If you have a question or concern about an issue, you should respectfully approach the person involved, whether it be faculty, staff, or a peer. If you have questions about a particular lecture/topic/assignment, you must go to the professor who presented that content.

- If your issue is not resolved by going to the involved faculty member, follow the chain of command: Professor → Program Director → Associate Director → School Director.

- Respect the role of faculty as teachers, mentors, and experts in the profession and maintain appropriate boundaries. Faculty desire to see all students succeed in school, on NCLEX-RN, and in the profession of nursing, and are supportive of students in the context of the student-faculty relationship; however, faculty are not trained counselors and cannot serve in the role of mental health counselor. When student issues arise, faculty may refer students for counseling or to other resources as needed.

- The nursing pre-licensure program is a full-time program. Clinical days and hours vary based on course requirements, clinical sites, and learning objectives. While clinical learning activities are generally scheduled during the week, precepted experiences and transition-to-practice activities often require weekend and/or nighttime scheduling. It remains the student’s responsibility to come to clinical well-rested and prepared in order to practice safely. Faculty make every attempt to give students as much advanced notice about schedules as possible, but as a rule, work or other activities should not be scheduled on clinical days.

B. Information Specific to Clinical Courses

i. Documentation Required for Clinical Placement

All required documentation for students must be submitted prior to starting the student’s first clinical course with the following submission deadlines: August 1 for Fall semester, December 1 for Spring semester or as communicated by the SON. Students must supply documentation
covering the inclusive period of time in which they are enrolled in clinical courses (even if all clinical hours have been completed), and must conform to the same due dates. Some clinical agencies have unique requirements and deadlines that students are also responsible for meeting. **Failure of any student to conform to any documentation deadline may result in dismissal from the nursing program.**
ii. *Proof of Completion of Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) Training*
All students must submit current proof of the successful completion of a course in basic cardiac life support 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** (BCLS) is required. Some certifications 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 CPR are *not* accepted.

iii. *Professional Liability (Malpractice) Insurance*
All students in a clinical 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. (Note: Liability insurance for Pre-licensure students usually does not cover any work outside of clinical course experiences.)

iv. *OSHA Bloodborne Pathogens and HIPAA Training*
The Occupational Safety and Healthcare Administration (OSHA) Bloodborne Pathogens and HIPAA training is required annually and signed documentation by the student will be provided to the SON. Training will be provided as necessary at intervals based on program requirements for student cohorts; training modules and mandatory quizzes are posted on the ABSN and BSN Homeplace in Blackboard. Students are expected to complete the quizzes as required by the SON, and on or before the posted deadline.

The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) and its implementing regulations restrict Western Carolina University 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; or the past, present, or future payment for 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 Western Carolina University School of Nursing's policy to comply fully with HIPAA's requirements. To that end, all students, faculty and
staff of the Western Carolina University 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. Failure to comply may result in dismissal from the School of Nursing. HIPAA educational materials and quizzes will be posted in the student homeplace and students are expected to demonstrate completion on or before the stated deadlines.

v. Student Health Form All students in clinical courses must have on file with the SON a completed SON Health Form. The SON Health Form must remain current for the time the student is enrolled in the program. Program director and clinical instructor should be notified of health issues. 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 Because students in all levels of SON programs will be performing patient care activities, there are additional health screening and educational requirements. Students may not participate in patient care activities until all immunization requirements are up-to-date. Immunizations must remain current through the end of all clinical rotations. Failure to meet these requirements may result in inability to attend clinical 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 clinical agency that requires more frequent TB testing, students assigned to that agency will be required to comply. Other Immunizations may be added as required by clinical facilities.

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 clinical 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 Checks
All nursing students must complete a criminal background check prior to matriculation in the pre-licensure nursing program. Directions for completing the background will be provided by the Office of Student Services. In addition, clinical facilities may require an additional criminal background check at the student’s expense.

Criminal background check results are submitted for review to the office of the Dean of the College of Health and Human Sciences. Findings that may impact progression in the program and/or professional licensure will be reported to the Director of the School of Nursing. A review of the CBC will be conducted by the Associate Dean of CHHS and the CBC Review Committee.

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

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

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

- **Identification** Departmentally approved identification badges are to be worn whenever the student goes into any clinical agency in any variation of professional attire or when representing Western Carolina University in a student capacity. Students who change their names must obtain new identification badges.

- **Uniforms** The standard uniform consists of Cherokee® uniform pants in the color eggplant (purple) and a white uniform top with the Western Carolina University Nursing arm patch securely sewn on the left sleeve. The patch should be attached mid way between hem and shoulder seam of a short-sleeved uniform shirt. Students will wear the standard uniform for all patient care activities, unless directed otherwise by their clinical faculty. A white long sleeve shirt that is form fitting may be worn underneath the uniform top or blouse. The long sleeve shirt must be plain and have no writing, pictures or advertising on it. Uniforms must be modest in that they do not reveal cleavage, midriffs, or undergarments; they must be clean and wrinkle-free. A white lab coat and the name badge are required for whenever the student will be in the clinical area without a uniform. Students may have embroidery on the lab jacket. Embroidery must read as follows:
  - (line one) First Name or First Initial Last Name
  - (line two) Nursing Student, Western Carolina University

Embroidery must be completed in eggplant ink to match uniform pants. Clothing worn under the lab coat should be professional attire, such as khaki pants, or skirts, with nice shirt or blouse. No blue jeans or t-shirts are to be worn in the clinical setting.

- **Shoes** Solid white, professional leather shoes must be worn with the hospital uniform. Athletic shoes are acceptable if they have all-leather uppers and are all white, including the soles. Clogs with solid white uppers are acceptable. Shoes with large holes on the top of the shoe are not acceptable. No open-toed shoes, sandals or flip-flops are allowed in any clinical setting at any time, including orientation or tour days.

- **Hosiery** White hose or all-white socks are required in hospital clinical settings.
- **Hair** must be secured off the face. Longer hair must be pulled back into a ponytail or bun.
- **Nails** Artificial nails are not allowed; nails should be kept short and clean with no polish to prevent injury to patients and for asepsis.
- **Jewelry** Students must adhere to the prevailing clinical facility policies regarding professional appearance and safety. The student must have a watch with either a second hand or a timer that is easy to read; watchbands should be simple rather than decorative bracelet-type. No necklaces or bracelets are allowed in the clinical setting. Rings are limited to one flat wedding band – rings with stones can easily damage patient skin as well as be an infection control risk. Students may wear one pair of non-dangling pierced earrings; other types of pierced jewelry (tongue, eyebrow, nose rings, ear spacer etc.) are not allowed in the clinical setting. Neither the SON nor the clinical agency will be responsible for lost or damaged jewelry.
- **Gum** Not allowed in any professional setting.
- **Tattoos** there should be no prominent uncovered tattoos visible in the clinical setting. If you have a tattoo on your forearm or upper neck, you must wear clothing that will cover the tattoo. Any tattoo that cannot be covered by clothing must be covered in another fashion (bandage, makeup, etc.)
- **Community health experience** Appropriate attire is agency specific. The SON identification badge must be affixed to the outermost layer of clothing on the upper-left chest area.

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

**x. Cumulative Clinical Evaluation**

Clinical Evaluation Tools are utilized throughout the nursing program to evaluate your attainment of the Expected Outcomes for clinical rotations. These documents are maintained in your student record, which is accessible to faculty for review as you progress through the program. Clinical performance is evaluated as satisfactory (S) or unsatisfactory (U). A satisfactory evaluation indicates that you have demonstrated attainment of minimal standards for each of the Expected Outcomes detailed on the evaluation tool.

To support student success in the program, faculty will develop an Improvement Plan for identified unsatisfactory performance. The improvement plan is developed in consultation with the student and is documented on the Performance Improvement Plan. The improvement plan becomes a permanent part of the student record.
Accumulation of three improvement plans over the course of the program requires review of overall performance in the curriculum by the Program Director in consultation with the Associated Director. The review is conducted to determine if the pattern of unsatisfactory performance represents a failure to attain Student Learning Program Outcomes and may result in assignment of a final grade of Unsatisfactory (U) for the involved clinical practicum and failure to progress in the program. Additionally, a single egregious and/or knowing violation of patient safety, confidentiality, or professionalism, may result in immediate review by Program Director in consultation with the Associate Director and possible dismissal from the program. All reviews of individual student performance are documented in the student record.
III. STUDENT DEVELOPMENT

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

iv. CHHS and SON Student Ambassadors  Students who are interested in representing the WCU SON in promotional events and celebrations, such as Education Fairs and Homecoming, may apply to become a Student Ambassador. Two students are chosen by faculty to represent each cohort of pre-licensure students. This is an excellent opportunity for students to show pride in the WCU SON and share what it is like to be in the nursing
B. Committees

i. **Pre Licensure Curriculum Committee (PreLCC)** The Pre Licensure Curriculum Committee is composed of prelicensure faculty and student representatives: two traditional students, and one ABSN student. 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. **Pre Licensure Student Affairs Committee (PreLSAC)** The Pre Licensure Student Affairs Committee is composed of at least five faculty members, and student representatives: two traditional students, and one ABSN student. 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 the pre licensure nursing programs and making recommendations for modifications as needed. The committee will act on appeals from students regarding admission, retention, and promotion. The committee develops student related policies for the SON.

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 SON. The representatives meet once a semester with the SON Director and invited faculty to discuss student issues and goals and to plan SON events. Students should not hesitate to contact their representative at any time if they have ideas or concerns.

iv. **College of Health and Human Sciences Dean’s Advisory Council.** This is a committee to enhance the student’s ability to communicate with the administration of the College of Health and Human Sciences. Student representatives are selected from each Pre-Licensure program. The committee meets approximately once a semester.

C. Engagement

i. **Visiting Scholars, Professional Meetings, & University Events** When the SON is involved in extracurricular events, there will be opportunities for students to participate. Faculty will determine whether such events may constitute course requirements. Regardless, students are encouraged to take advantage of these opportunities to participate in the professional or social life of the SON, 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 Homeplace for SON 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 Résumé Referral Service. The Résumé 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 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. The Career Services Center reference file is beneficial when applying for graduate school or employment in the future and faculty members are no longer employed at WCU. 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: The 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 SON 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 SON recognizes outstanding graduates through a variety of awards presented at the SON Convocation and at the College of Health and Human Sciences awards ceremony. Nursing faculty nominate eligible graduates. Information may be solicited from the
nominates to facilitate faculty voting on the recipients. Awards may be initiated or added to by alumni and friends of the SON; contact the SON Director to make arrangements.

i. **The Deitz Outstanding Student Award** These awards honoring Dr. Vivian Deitz, Head of the SON 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. **Ethics Award** This award was funded by a graduate in honor of Dr. Barbara Cosper and Dr. Sharon Jacques and is given to a pre-licensure student who has demonstrated high ethical standards.

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

v. **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 SON 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 reported 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 and adheres to the standards of professionalism within 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, faculty, students, clinical facilities, staff, patients/clients, or others with whom one has contact in the role of a Western Carolina University School 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 clinicals, 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
  - Video
  - Pamphlet

- HIPAA

- WCU Career Services Social Media Information
Appendix C

Performance Improvement Plan
Western Carolina University School of Nursing
Pre-Licensure Programs

Student: First M Last
Semester/Course: Semester, YYYY / Nursing XXX
Date: Month DD, YYYY
Faculty: First M Last, Instructor of Record
First M Last, Instructor
Issue:
Comments:
Evidenced by:
1.
2.

Corrective Action:
Expectations:
Student Plan for Correction:
Failure to maintain this plan, or to continue to have noted tardiness in the clinical setting will result in further corrective action, up to and potentially incurring a clinical unsatisfactory or failure.

I have received a copy of this improvement plan form and will keep the contents of the form and conversation confidential. I understand this form will be placed in my student record.

________________________________________
First M. Last, Student ______________________

________________________________________
First M. Last, Instructor ______________________

________________________________________
First M. Last, Instructor of Record ______________________
V. COLLEGE OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SCIENCES & UNDERGRADUATE PRE-LICENSE 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. I also have had an opportunity to ask questions about the Policy.

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

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

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

________________________________  __________________________________
Student Name                      Student Signature
________________________________
Date

Pre-Licensure Nursing Student Handbook Agreement: I acknowledge that I have received and read the Pre-Licensure Nursing Student Handbook 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.