

# **GRADUATE NURSING STUDENT HANDBOOK**

**2020 - 2021**

Supplemental  
to  
*WCU Graduate Catalog*

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## WELCOME

*I want to welcome you to the Western Carolina University School of Nursing (WCU-SON) and thank you for choosing WCU-SON to pursue a nursing degree. You will have the opportunity to work with faculty who are experienced educators and clinicians, committed to your success and helping you meet your educational goals. I would be remiss if I did not mention the unique circumstances that we are facing as a result of COVID19; a global pandemic presents challenges that must be addressed in the classroom and clinical aspects of your education. But I can promise you that the SON faculty and staff have been working endlessly to ensure that you will have a rich educational experience. You have chosen an exciting time to enter the extraordinary profession of nursing.*

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

*I am excited to welcome you as a part of the Western family and I wish you success in your studies. I hope for the opportunity to meet you personally, either virtually or in person.*

*You are the future of nursing!*

*Marguerite J. Murphy, DNP, RN  
Interim Director and Associate Professor  
Western Carolina University  
School of Nursing*

## **Instructions to Students Concerning the *Graduate Nursing Student Handbook***

All students in the nursing program are responsible for reading and understanding the information contained in the *Graduate Nursing Student Handbook* and adhering to any policy changes and/or updates in subsequent editions. Each student must read the *Graduate Nursing Student Handbook* and submit a signed copy of the Student Handbook Agreement upon admission to the nursing program. The signed copy will be uploaded by the student to their Castlebranch account. The Student Handbook Agreement is in the appendices and is accessible on the [School of Nursing Student Services website](#) and in Blackboard MS(N) and DNP Homeplace.

In addition to the Graduate Nursing Student Handbook, all School of Nursing graduate students should read and be familiar with all policies found in the *Graduate Catalog*.

### **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 Graduate Catalog is the official source of information concerning University policies, student services, academic regulations, the University calendar, and degree requirements. Students can obtain a copy of the *Graduate Catalog* at <http://catalog.wcu.edu/>.

#### **B. Introduction to the School of Nursing**

The North Carolina Legislature, at the request 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 Bachelor of Science (BSN) students graduated in 1973. In 1982, the RN to BSN program was founded to further serve the people of western North Carolina.

The first class of Master of Science degree students started in the Family Nurse Practitioner track in 1999. Since then, tracks have been added in Nurse Educator, Nursing Leadership, and Nurse Anesthesia. The Nurse Anesthesia program transitioned to a DNP degree in 2017. In May of 2007, the Accelerated BSN program was founded for

individuals with baccalaureate degrees in other fields. Shortly after, in July of 2007, the nursing program was officially changed to WCU's School of Nursing.

In 2009 Regionally Increasing Baccalaureate Nurses (RIBN) Program was introduced. Students in this program work with a partnered community college and WCU to earn both their Associate Degree in Nursing and Bachelor of Science in Nursing within four years.

In 2013, the School of Nursing established a Post-Master's Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) program jointly with University of North Carolina Charlotte (UNCC). In May 2018, well ahead of the nationally mandated deadline of 2022, the Nurse Anesthesia program began its transition to a BSN to DNP program.

The School now has well over 3,500 alumni who practice in clinical and leadership roles nationwide. Students who graduate from the School of Nursing perform well on their licensure and certification exams with pass rates well above national averages. Students have clinical experiences throughout western North Carolina in a variety of health care institutions and agencies. Through these clinical sites students gain valuable experience working in both rural and urban areas.

WCU's School of Nursing is approved by the North Carolina Board of Nursing and accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education. The Nurse Anesthesia program is also accredited by the Council on Accreditation (COA) of Nurse Anesthesia Educational Programs.

### **C. Organization of the School of Nursing**

A list of School of Nursing faculty and staff can be found at [nursingdirectory.wcu.edu](http://nursingdirectory.wcu.edu).

### **D. Introduction to the RN to MS(N) Early Entry Option**

The RN to MS(N) Early Entry option is designed to assist RNs with good academic records to move smoothly through the RN to BSN curriculum directly into MS(N) study for advanced nursing roles. The RN to MS(N) Early Entry Option is only available for the Nurse Educator and Nursing Leadership programs.

RN to BSN students may apply for consideration for this option after they have completed 12 hours of RN to BSN nursing courses. If accepted, the 500-level core graduate nursing courses will be applied to the RN to BSN requirement for up to 8 credits of undergraduate electives. Students maintain undergraduate status until completion of the BSN and are *not* guaranteed acceptance into the Master's program. Students should refer to the Post-Licensure Handbook, their RN to BSN advisor, and the coordinator of the RN to MS(N) Early Entry Option for questions about this program.

### **E. Introduction to the BSN to DNP Nurse Anesthesia Program**

The NA Program requires 86 semester hours of graduate coursework, which includes approximately 2,600 clinical hours. Students are admitted annually in the summer semester. Graduates will have a solid foundation for full service nurse anesthesia practice

and will be prepared to sit for the national certification exam. Students in this program should refer to the DNP Nurse Anesthesia Student Handbook for additional information and details.

### **F. Introduction to the Master of Science in Nursing Programs**

The Master of Science degree in Nursing – MS(N) – is composed of three academic tracks: Family Nurse Practitioner (FNP), Nurse Educator (NE), and Nursing Leadership (NL). The tracks are offered on a full-time basis for the FNP, and on a part-time basis for the NL and NE. Graduate classes are admitted annually in the fall semester (FNP), Fall semester and Spring semester (NE & NL). The NA program has transitioned to the BSN to DNP program and no longer admits masters level students.

The FNP track is designed to prepare advanced practice nurses to provide primary care in a variety of settings. The FNP track prepares students to sit for either national certification exams offered by American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) and American Association of Nurse Practitioners (AANP). The FNP Program requires 52 semester hours of graduate coursework including 640 clinical hours.

The NE track is designed to prepare nurses to serve in one of three areas of nursing education: academic, staff, or patient. The NE track requires 38 to 39 semester hours including 165 hours of practicum.

The NL track is designed to prepare nurses to serve in leadership positions in various service delivery and academic settings. The NL track requires 40-41 semester hours and 220 clinical hours.

### **A Comprehensive Exam is required for each track.**

### **G. Introduction to the Post-Masters Certificates**

The School of Nursing (SON) offers two post-masters certificate programs; Family Nurse Practitioner and Nurse Educator. Students in these programs are exempt from the thesis or research project requirements.

A Post-Master's FNP Certificate is available to nurses who have earned a Master of Science in Nursing MS(N) degree. The FNP certificate course of study prepares the nurse in the advanced practice role of an FNP with competencies in family health promotion and clinical management of common conditions across the lifespan. The two-year program requires 43 hours of graduate course work including 640 clinical hours.

The Nurse Educator Post-Master Certificate is available for those students who have earned a Master of Science in Nursing MS(N) degree or those with a master's degree in a related discipline. The post-graduate certificate course of study requires 19 hours of graduate coursework.

## **H. Introduction to the Post-Master's Doctor of Nursing Practice Program**

The DNP program was established as a consortium with UNCC in 2013. Students are admitted annually in the fall semester. The DNP program requires 42 Post-Master's hours, including 500 Post-Master's clinical hours. The Program offers both full-time and part-time enrollment options.

## **I. 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 curricula build on the baccalaureate education and prepare 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.

According to Roach (1997) the professionalization of caring in nursing includes:

- **Competence** – knowledge, wisdom, skills, judgment, experience and motivation.
- **Compassion** – shared awareness and connectedness with experiences of others.
- **Commitment** – deliberate choice to act in accordance with beliefs and obligations.
- **Conscience** – state of moral awareness.
- **Confidence** – internal belief that one will act in a right, proper, or effective way which fosters trusting relationships.
- **Comportment** – demeanor, conduct, personal bearing, behavior.

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 inter-professional 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.

## **J. Graduate Program Outcomes**

### ***i. Graduates of the Western Carolina University MS(N) Program will:***

- Demonstrate competence in a defined role or area of advanced nursing practice.
- Utilize the process of scientific inquiry to translate evidence into advanced practice nursing.
- Demonstrate cultural sensitivity and an understanding of human diversity in delivery of health care across the lifespan.
- Build and lead collaborative inter-professional care teams to improve quality outcomes.
- Lead in the integration of healthcare services across practice environments.
- Promote excellence in practice environments through a commitment to lifelong learning.

### ***ii. Graduates of the Western Carolina University DNP Program will:***

- Analyze and integrate evidence from nursing science with evidence from other relevant scientific disciplines to form a scientific foundation for advanced practice in nursing.
- Apply clinical scholarship, scientific evidence, and analytical methods to improve health care outcomes.
- Develop and evaluate systems to enhance safety and quality of health care.
- Advocate and participate in collaborative interdisciplinary efforts to improve health outcomes at the practice/organization, community, state and national levels.
- Engage in culturally competent and ethically sound advanced nursing practice.
- Demonstrate leadership in the improvement of patient outcomes and transformation of health care delivery.
- Manage directly the complex problems of clients/populations and systems to facilitate access and navigation of the health care system to improve health outcomes.

## **II. EDUCATIONAL POLICIES, PROCEDURES, AND INFORMATION**

The student is responsible for following the School of Nursing policies as presented in this document. Policies in program specific Handbooks supersede policies in the Graduate Nursing Student Handbook.

As noted in the WCU Graduate Catalog, the SON reserves the right to modify school policies and procedures. Students are encouraged to periodically consult with their nursing faculty advisor and the *Graduate Nursing Student Handbook* for current information. The SON will make every effort to notify currently enrolled students of any changes. Changes and updates to student information will be posted on the SON website. Students are expected to keep the SON and the University informed of their current address, phone numbers, and email address.

The Student Handbook Agreement, which documents the student's receipt of the information in this Handbook, is in the appendices. A signed copy of the form must be uploaded to the student's CastleBranch account. Students are responsible for reviewing future student handbooks as the content is subject to change.

## **A. General Information**

### ***i. Admissions and Progression***

#### ***a. Admission to the Graduate Programs***

For information on each program's admissions process visit the intended program's page on the SON website at [nursing.wcu.edu](http://nursing.wcu.edu).

#### ***b. Academic Progress/Advisement Warning***

A student who is not progressing satisfactorily in a course or in the program will receive documentation of academic warning and recommendation to meet with his/her academic advisor to discuss academic assistance. Once the faculty member has signed the academic warning form it will be provided to the student to review and return within one week of the conference. The completed form will be placed in the student file with the advisor, program director, and student receiving a copy (See Appendix A).

If the unsatisfactory progress involves clinical performance, the student may be placed on clinical probation until satisfactory improvement has been made.

#### ***c. Academic Dismissal***

Any WCU graduate student who accumulates more than three grades of C or any grade of F will automatically be dismissed from the Graduate School. A student who has been admitted provisionally and fails to meet the terms of admission will also be dismissed from the Graduate School (*WCU Graduate Catalog*). **The graduate nursing program student is held to a higher standard and a student who accumulates two grades of "C" or any grade of "F" or "U" will automatically be dismissed from the Graduate Nursing Program.**

Students are expected to maintain a running calculation of their status as exam and paper grades accumulate. Students who find themselves in danger of falling below the 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 Graduate Catalog or run the risk of F grades on their transcripts.

All clinical nursing courses are graded Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory (S/U). Progressive evaluation of student performance is provided throughout a clinical course with suggestions for improvement. Students are expected to be familiar with criteria and to seek clarification when needed.

*Any safety or professionalism violation that results in severe actual or potential harm to the patient/client may warrant an automatic (U) in the course at the discretion of the instructor.*

Any student who is dismissed has the option of appealing the decision (see Appeals) or of reapplying to the appropriate program.

*d. Dismissal for Health*

Dismissal from the graduate nursing program due to a health problem may occur in the following situations:

- If the condition persists and the student does not get the required professional help.
- If the health problem requires the student to miss learning experiences cannot reasonably be made up before the end of the session. The student may in this situation either withdraw from the course or negotiate for a grade of incomplete. The granting of an incomplete is at the discretion of the faculty.
- If the health problem is not responsive to treatment, or the student is unable to demonstrate sufficient safe practice, the student will be dismissed from the graduate nursing program. The student will be ineligible for re-admission until safe practice can be demonstrated. Before the student is dismissed, a conference will be scheduled between faculty and student to discuss the health problem. A written record of this conference will be placed in the student's file. The student will be given opportunity to make written comments of her/his own.

*e. Re-admission of Nursing Graduate Students*

Once dismissed from the graduate nursing program, a student cannot register for graduate nursing courses and may not be re-admitted for one year.

If a student was also dismissed from the graduate school, the graduate nursing student seeking readmission must petition in writing the Dean of the Graduate School and must then reapply to the individual program. Upon approval from the Dean of the Graduate School for re-admission, the student must apply for re-admission to the graduate nursing program prior to the respective program's deadline for the semester in which they wish to be readmitted. Re-admission to the program will be based upon available space, student's previous performance, and faculty recommendations.

Approval for re-admission may be accompanied by additional requirements. A re-admitted student who receives an additional grade of C or lower, or a U (Unsatisfactory), will be permanently dismissed.

*f. FNP Track Readmission and Continuance Criteria*

Students may have interruptions in the regular progress through their FNP Track or FNP certificate curriculum. To ensure appropriate clinical, didactic content, and skills mastery, this policy applies to reentry or continuance in the FNP Track. An absence of more than two consecutive semesters (fall and spring) from the FNP Track will require reevaluation of clinical and didactic skills and knowledge before readmission or continuance in the FNP Track is granted.

This reevaluation process will include individual comprehensive exams for NSG 622 *Advanced Pharmacology* and NSG 690 *Advanced Health/Physical Assessment and Diagnostics*, as well as a comprehensive patient exam simulation for NSG 691 *FNP Applied Advanced Physical Assessment and Diagnostics*. For any exam in which a grade of 80% or better is not achieved, the applicant will be required to take that course again for transcript credit before re-entering or continuing in the track.

*g. Appeals Policy for the School of Nursing*

Students have the right to appeal a final assigned grade or dismissal from a graduate nursing program. Students may only appeal a final grade or program dismissal if they can show the grade or program dismissal was assigned ***arbitrarily or impermissibly***. Students who wish to appeal a grade on a specific 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 can be found in the *Academic Action Appeal Policy* section of the *Graduate Catalog*.

*ii. Student Complaints/Grievance Information*

For WCU School of Nursing, a student grievance or complaint is a university, college or program related problem or condition that a student believes to be unfair, inequitable, discriminatory, or a hinderance to the

educational process and may be addressed through the following university processes.

- a. **WCU’s Dean of Students maintains a webpage for *Complaints and Concerns*:** (<https://www.wcu.edu/experience/dean-of-students/complaints-and-concerns.aspx>) which provides definitions, examples and portals to report comments, complaints, concerns and/or bias/discrimination/intimidation occurrences.
- b. **Harassment Complaints: WCU Policy 129 “Title IX Sexual Harassment”** provides a complaint process for allegations of sexual harassment.  
University definitions and processes to follow are outlined at this URL: <https://www.wcu.edu/discover/leadership/office-of-the-chancellor/legal-counsel-office/university-policies/numerical-index/university-policy-129.aspx>
- c. **Discrimination Complaints: WCU Policy 53 “Unlawful Discrimination”** provides a complaint process for allegations of discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, political affiliation and veteran status.  
University definitions and processes to follow are outlined at this URL: <https://www.wcu.edu/discover/leadership/office-of-the-chancellor/legal-counsel-office/university-policies/numerical-index/university-policy-53.aspx>
- d. **Academic/Grade Appeal: *School of Nursing Students*** have the right to appeal a final assigned grade or dismissal from a graduate nursing program. Students may only appeal a final grade or program dismissal if they can show the grade or program dismissal was assigned arbitrarily or impermissibly. Students who wish to appeal a grade on a specific 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 can be found in the Academic Action Appeal Policy section of the Graduate Catalog  
([http://catalog.wcu.edu/content.php?catoid=48&navoid=1795#Academic\\_Action\\_Appeal](http://catalog.wcu.edu/content.php?catoid=48&navoid=1795#Academic_Action_Appeal))

**Other:** Concerns that are not under the jurisdiction of a university grievance or complaint process may be reported to and addressed by SON Faculty or Program Directors. Issues that are reported to SON Faculty or Program Directors that are covered by another university process will be referred to the appropriate University process.

### ***iii. Academic Information***

*a. Advising*

Each student is assigned a faculty advisor upon admission to the program. The assigned faculty advisor may change throughout the student's academic tenure.

The faculty advisor will assist the student in planning and implementing his/her course of study throughout the graduate program. In addition to required advising sessions, the student is responsible for seeking advising meetings as needed throughout the semester. The student and the faculty jointly determine meeting times. Information for registration will be available in the respective program's Homeplace.

On occasion, life events occur that may impact the ability of a student to complete the outlined course of study. Examples include debilitating family illness, financial hardship, pregnancy, etc. If this occurs, it is strongly recommended the student contact his/her appointed advisor to develop a plan to promote ongoing success.

**Please Note: Students are responsible for knowing the program of study and progression criteria for their designated program/track. Responsibility for choosing classes, dropping classes, and meeting curriculum and graduation requirements ultimately belongs to the student, not the advisor.**

*The student advisee is expected to:*

- Consult the *WCU Graduate Catalog* to become familiar with procedures and deadlines.
- Schedule appointments as needed with the assigned advisor to review program curriculum, especially prior to registration.
- Plan for course selection prior to the advisor appointment.
- Complete any required forms completely and accurately.
- Make final course selection and register for classes *after* consulting with your advisor.
- Inform the advisor if registration problems are expected or encountered (not just a section change).
- Keep your advisor informed about academic difficulties **as they occur**.
- Speak with the Program Director if the assigned advisor is not meeting your needs.
- Perform regular degree audits.
- Evaluate your advisor each semester through a link provided by the Office of Student Services.

*b. Grading Standards and Enrollment*

Exams, papers, and other evaluation criteria contributing to each course grade are outlined in the corresponding syllabus; criteria for papers,

presentations, clinical performance, and other evaluation methods are available online for each course. Grading for elective nursing courses is at the discretion of each instructor.

### *1. Grading System*

The MS(N) and DNP programs use a 4-point scale for letter grading. Clinical courses and independent study courses are graded as Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory.

Grade	Meaning	GPA Quality Points	Percentage
A	Superior	4.0	90% - 100%
B	Good	3.0	80% - 89%
C	Passing	2.0	70% - 79%
F	Failure	0	69% or below
I	Incomplete		
S	Satisfactory		
U	Unsatisfactory		

### *2. Incomplete Grades*

Instructors may award an incomplete (“I”) grade when students are unable to complete a course for nonacademic reasons. An incomplete is not a satisfactory grade and may lead to an academic warning. All incomplete grades must be removed and a grade of A, B, C, F, S, or U must be submitted to the registrar by the last day of classes in the next semester, excluding the summer.

A grade of F will be automatically assigned if the student does not complete the coursework. A grade of incomplete will be awarded only when there is a reasonable possibility the student can make up the work missed to pass the course. All incomplete grades in courses taken as part of the degree program must be resolved prior to graduation.

### *3. Grade Penalties*

Grade penalties are outlined in the Attendance Policy and in the criteria for each paper or assignment. These penalties are at the discretion of the course instructor, and may include a zero grade, point reduction, being dismissed from the course or program, or delayed progress in the program.

### *4. Required Grade Point Average (GPA) for Graduation*

A 3.0 GPA, or B average, is required for graduation in all graduate degrees. Grades received in all graduate courses will be included in the calculating the graduate cumulative GPA.

### *5. Course Load*

Full-time credit load is determined by University policy. The maximum full-time course load for graduate students is 15 credit hours per semester. The minimum full-time load per regular semester, fall and spring, is nine credit hours.

*c. Use of References for Assignments*

The nursing faculty expect students to use references **no older than 5 years**. For variations to this policy, the student must consult the faculty. The standard reference manual for the School of Nursing is the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, 7th edition (2020).

*d. Format for all Student Documents*

All scholarly assignments must be submitted as Word documents using the most current edition of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association's* APA style.

All assignments are to be submitted in Blackboard as an attached Word document rather than in the body of an email. Students must use the following file naming convention when submitting course documents:

CourseID\_lastname\_firstname\_daymonthyear\_title  
(Title means the NAME of the paper or assignment)

*e. Laptop Requirement*

Students are required to have a laptop computer with webcam capability for use throughout the nursing program. Headphones and microphone may be required. 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. NA and FNP students must purchase access upon admission and every fall semester through the WCU bookstore. NE and NL students must purchase access for all courses that require online testing. Students are responsible for ensuring that their computers are up-to-date and compatible with the software. Post masters DNP students will be notified of any online testing software needs on a course-by-course basis.

*g. MS(N) Thesis and Project Guidelines and Documents*

Two documents provide guidance for the required MS(N) Thesis and Research Project. These include the *Advanced Nursing Project Guidelines* and the *Thesis Guidelines*. These documents can be obtained in their entirety on the Western Carolina University School of Nursing website and in MS(N) Homeplace.

Students are responsible to download and follow one of these documents as they pursue their Project or Thesis in collaboration with their committee faculty chair.

*h. DNP Clinical Scholarly Project Guidelines*

Guidelines for completion of the Clinical Scholarly Project can be found in the *Doctor of Nursing Practice Clinical Scholarly Project Guidelines*. This document can be found in its entirety on the Western Carolina School of Nursing website, the DNP Homeplace in Blackboard, and embedded in each of the Clinical Residency and Project Development courses. Students are responsible for downloading and following this document as they pursue completion of their Project in collaboration with their committee faculty chair, clinical expert, and additional committee members.

*iv. 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 Graduate Nursing Program, the University, and in their careers.

Nursing students are held to the University's *Academic Honesty Integrity*, published in the *WCU Graduate Catalog*.

Dishonesty will not be tolerated. 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. Consequences will be determined by the supervising instructor. Circumstances of the act of academic dishonesty and consequent penalties will be documented in the student's academic file and reported to the School of Nursing Director, College of Health and Human Sciences Dean or Dean of the Graduate School, and the School of Nursing Graduate Student Affairs Committee in accordance with WCU policy.

Examples of academic dishonesty include, but are not limited to:

- **Cheating** - Using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise. This includes, but is not limited to: utilization of peers or classmates on assignments, 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 Tutoring Services website on the *Writing Support* page.

*b. Social Media Policy*

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 (Appendix C).

*c. Attendance Policy*

Students are expected to attend all scheduled learning activities such as orientation, lectures/classes, seminars, labs, observations, clinical rotations, evaluations, conferences, and other activities as scheduled by faculty. Refer to individual course syllabi for course specific attendance policies.

Learning activities may be scheduled for any time throughout the day (including early morning, evening, night shifts, and weekends). Students are responsible for their own transportation to and from all scheduled learning activities. Students should not schedule appointments or activities conflicting with scheduled learning activities.

*1. Absence for Extenuating Circumstances*

In the case of outstanding circumstances students **must receive prior approval for any exceptions to the attendance policy**. All absences from scheduled clinical experiences require communication with the clinical faculty to arrange for a make-up assignment. Due to the nature of some course activities, a make-up session may not be possible. Any absences will be documented in the student’s clinical evaluation tool.

*2. Tardiness*

Attendance means arriving *prior to the scheduled experience and staying for the full duration*. Late arrival is disruptive to a

class/clinical setting and the faculty member has the option to exclude the student from the learning activity. Faculty members have the option to exclude students from activities for late arrival. Exclusion from class/clinical learning activity due to tardiness results in absence and will be treated as such. In the case of an emergency students must make every effort to notify the appropriate faculty member. Students who arrive late to an exam will *not* receive additional time.

### *3. Clinical Preparation*

Students who do not complete assigned preparation for clinical have committed a safety violation, which is considered unsatisfactory performance. Students who fail to comply with attendance policies may be issued a failing or unsatisfactory grade for the involved course.

### *4. Religious Absence Policy*

WCU allows two days of absence from each academic year for religious observances required by faith. Students are encouraged to discuss these absences with the faculty member prior to the end of the drop/add in case the absence(s) will keep the student from completing the requirements of the course. To obtain permission to be absent for religious reasons, a student must complete the [Absent Due to Required Religious Observances](#) form, obtain all necessary signatures, submit it to each instructor for review and approval, and submit it to the Senior Academic Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs for final approval at least two weeks prior to the proposed absence.

If the student completes the form and submits it to the instructor **prior to the two-week time frame**, he/she shall be given the opportunity to make up any tests or other work missed due to an excused absence for a required religious observance.

### *d. Core Competencies Necessary for Students*

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 including physical, cognitive, communication and behavioral core competencies essential to the functions of the entry-level professional nurse. These core competencies are considered to be the minimum and are 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 despite any handicap with or without reasonable accommodation.

Examples of competencies for each of the areas are below. These descriptions are intended to be examples and are not all-inclusive.

- **Observation:**  
An 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. An applicant 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. An applicant should be able to execute motor movements required to perform general care and emergency treatment of clients including, 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:**  
An 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.

Candidates 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 being admitted to their program, each student will be asked to submit a signed statement indicating the student is capable of meeting these core competencies. The signature form can be found in the respective program's Homeplace in Blackboard. This signed statement will be uploaded to CastleBranch and 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 Accessibility Resources. Students need to be aware 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 initiating and completing the process with the Office of Accessibility Resources and providing documentation of the disability to the professor and requesting accommodation(s).

The Office of Accessibility Resources will provide the student with a letter of suggested accommodations for the student to give 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 Office of Accessibility Services cannot agree upon a reasonable accommodation the issue can then be taken to the Director of the School of Nursing, moving on to the Associate Dean as necessary. In each of these steps, the student's right to confidentiality will be protected.

*e. 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 program.

*f. 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. Per this policy, drug testing will take place upon acceptance to a SON program, when required by clinical agencies, and if 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 Director of Student Services, Program Director, and Director of the School of Nursing will collaborate with the Dean's office to implement the policy. The policy may be reviewed in its entirety on the College of Health and Human Services website ([chhs.wcu.edu](http://chhs.wcu.edu)).

All SON students must sign the Acknowledgement and Consent Form located at the back of this handbook. The signed form attests to the student's acknowledgement of the provisions of the policy and consent to undergo any drug and or alcohol testing required by the program. Results of screenings are handled with utmost confidentiality.

Students who submit a positive drug screening will be contacted by CastleBranch's Medical Research Officer within 72 hours for consultation. If cause of a false-positive is not identified, students will be will not be able to be placed at clinical sites. Students in this situation will be dismissed from their program due to an inability to progress within their program.

A return of dilute negative is treated as a positive screen. Dilute negatives are often the result of over hydration but can be a result of efforts to tamper with the validity of a screening. However, as this result does not read as a true positive screening students will have 48 hours to complete a second drug screening.

*g. Expected Respectful and Professional Behaviors*

The University is committed to developing and maintaining the highest standards of scholarship and conduct. All students are subject to the rules and regulations of the University. In accepting admission to Graduate School, students indicate their willingness to abide by University rules and regulations and acknowledge the right of the University to take appropriate disciplinary action, including suspension and/or expulsion, as appropriate, for failure to abide by university rules and regulations. Rules related to student conduct and procedures for the resolution of cases may be found in the *Code of Ethics* and the *Academic Integrity Policy* in the Graduate Catalog.

Students are expected to maintain a respectful decorum in the classroom, to assume the responsibilities of a well-prepared graduate nursing student when they enter the clinical area for training, and to exercise professional socialization.

The School of Nursing and Graduate Nursing Program places a high value on open communication with students, fair and equitable treatment, and effective instruction. Teaching/learning in the WCU Graduate Nursing Program is predicated on the belief that students are fellow members of the academic community, deserving of respect and consideration in their dealings with faculty.

Students are encouraged to review the Western Carolina University *Code of Student Conduct* webpage for complete details.

1. *Disruption of Learning Environments:*

*Children:* Due to safety factors, students' children are not allowed in lab or clinical settings. Due to disruption of group process, children are not allowed in seminars. Children may not be left in University buildings without direct adult supervision.

*Cellular phones:* Group experiences are easily disrupted by electronic devices. Students who must leave such devices on are asked to set them to vibrate and to sit near the door for easy exit. Others are asked to turn such devices off.

2. *Students' Rights and Responsibilities in the Classroom:*

- Attend all classes at scheduled times.
- Notify the course instructor if unable to attend class.
- Maintain a respectful and professional decorum while in the classroom.
- Read all assigned course materials prior to class.
- Discuss course problems and academic difficulties with the instructor in a timely manner.
- Complete all requisite evaluations in a timely manner.
- Observe Western Carolina University *Standards of Conduct, Code of Ethics, and the Academic Honesty Policy.*
- Students have the right to the Graduate School appeal/grievance procedure.
- Students have the right to academic and personal advisement at Western Carolina University.

**B. Information Specific to Clinical Courses**

*i. Documentation Required for Clinical Placement*

All required documentation for students must be submitted to CastleBranch prior to starting the first clinical course. Unless otherwise stated, submission deadlines for incoming students are **August 1** for fall semester, **December 1** for spring semester and **May 1** for summer semester.

Students must supply documentation for the duration of their program. The Office of Student Services will communicate any unresolved clinical requirements prior to the beginning of a clinical experience. Failure to submit required documentation by the provided deadlines can result in inability to participate in clinical experiences and/or dismissal from the nursing program. Clinical agency requirements are subject to change and may include screenings, trainings, or immunizations beyond those for required by SON.

Students must demonstrate currency of all required documentation while active in a Graduate Nursing Program, regardless of involvement in clinical activities.

***ii. Proof of Completion of Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) Training***

Students are required to upload a photocopy (front and back) of their active certification in **Basic Cardiac Life Support (BCLS) for Health Care Providers**. It is the student's responsibility to maintain active certification in BCLS. The CPR course must be completed through the American Heart Association's BCLS program. Online courses for CPR are *not* accepted.

In addition, Advanced Cardiac Life Support (ACLS) and Pediatric Advanced Life Support (PALS) Certification are required for the Nurse Anesthesia Program.

***iii. Professional Liability (Malpractice) Insurance***

FNP, NE, NL, and DNP students are automatically enrolled in WCU's Professional Malpractice Liability Insurance during all clinical/practicum semesters. A non-refundable charge will be issued to the student's account.

Nurse Anesthesia students should see the Nurse Anesthesia Program Handbook for insurance information specific to their program.

***iv. OSHA Bloodborne Pathogens and HIPAA Training***

The Occupational Safety and Healthcare Administration (OSHA) Bloodborne Pathogens and HIPAA trainings are required annually. Trainings and assessments for OSHA and HIPAA can be found in the program Homeplace. After completing the assessments with 80% or higher students should submit a screenshot showing the assessment name, date taken, grade, and student name to CastleBranch. Students will follow the same steps to submit their OSHA and HIPAA renewal each year.

The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) and its implementing regulations restrict students and faculty use and disclosure of Protected Health Information (PHI) to protect a patient's privacy. PHI includes information 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 identifies the participant or for which there is a reasonable basis to believe the information can be used to identify the participant. PHI includes information of persons living or deceased.

It is the SON's policy to fully comply with HIPAA's requirements. All students, faculty and staff who have access to PHI must comply with all HIPAA Privacy Policies. Failure to comply may result in dismissal from the School of Nursing.

See *Appendix B* for WCU's *Exposure Control Plan for Bloodborne Pathogens* per OSHA requirements.

***v. Physical Examination Form***

All students are required to submit a completed SON Health Form, provided in

the program Homeplace, to their CastleBranch account. The student must inform the Program Director of any changes in physical, mental, or emotional health which could interfere with providing safe clinical care. If there is a change in a student's health status, the student must submit an updated health form or note from a health care provider stating the student is physically and mentally able to perform in clinical spaces as specified in the Core Competencies. Students are responsible for ensuring this form is updated as needed while enrolled in the program.

***vi. Immunizations and TB Screening***

Students may not participate in patient care activities until documentation of all immunization requirements being current has been submitted to CastleBranch. 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. The Office of Student Services will notify students of upcoming renewal requirements in a timely manner.

Required immunizations for clinical participation vary according to site but typically include, *but are 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.
- ***Tuberculosis Testing:*** Annual screenings may be required and expire 12 months from the test date. If a clinical agency requires more frequent TB testing, students assigned the agency will be required to comply.

Additional immunizations may be 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 Health 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 (CBC) prior to matriculation in the pre-licensure nursing program. An initial CBC is included with the purchase of a student account with CastleBranch. Clinical facilities may require additional CBCs to meet agency standards. All CBCs are completed at the student's expense.

Criminal background check results are first reviewed by the Office of Student Services. Per CHHS policy, findings that may impact progression in the program and/or professional licensure will be reviewed by the Associate Dean of CHHS and the CBC Review Committee.

In the event 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 occur following completion of the initial 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 instruct 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 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. Laboratory Fire and Safety Training***

All Family Nurse Practitioner and Nurse Anesthesia students must complete fire and laboratory safety training upon admission to the program.

***ix. Guidelines for Dress in the Clinical Setting***

Students must always wear WCU name badges while in clinical settings. Graduate students should follow the dress code of the organization in which they are performing clinical practicums. Students should communicate with their preceptor or clinical coordinator regarding professional dress in the setting.

***x. Maintenance of Current Licensure and Certification***

It is the student's responsibility to maintain continuous state licensure as an RN in the state in which the student plans to complete his/her practicum. Other licensure and certifications may be required by each track or program.

***xi. Student Responsibilities During Clinical Experiences***

Clinical experience is a vital piece to the educational outcomes of the Graduate Nursing Programs in the SON. Students are expected to maintain the professional responsibilities and behaviors below. This list is not all inclusive.

- Plan activities with the faculty and preceptor to attain identified goals.
- Confer with the clinical preceptor and faculty if experiences are not conducive to meeting objectives.
- Complete all requisite evaluations in a timely manner.
- Each student is responsible for the accurate completion of the clinical log as specified in the course syllabus.
- Arrive in the clinical area at a time established by each clinical site preceptor, allowing enough time for preparation.
- Clinical commitment time is expected to be completed. Professional behavior is expected regarding completion of clinical responsibilities and other assignments as appropriate.
- Each student is encouraged to provide clinical objectives and/or goals to their clinical preceptor on the first day of the clinical site rotation. This will enable the clinical preceptor to assign patients/teaching experiences based on student need. The clinical preceptor/clinical coordinator will be responsible for case selection each clinical day considering each student's individual ability, needs, and knowledge, and case availability.
- Each facility has specific guidelines and policies regarding blood borne pathogens and universal precautions. All facilities provide and maintain personal protective equipment needed for the practice of universal precautions. *The student will review and adhere to each facility's policies while on rotation.*
- Vacation/Conference Time/Requests for Time Off
  - Students are encouraged to participate in local, state and national professional activities. Attendance at some educational activities, outside of the normal course offerings may be required. Educational conference requests must be made in writing to, and approved by, the Program Director and Assistant Director of the DNP Nurse Anesthesia Program *at least one month* before the requested time off.
  - All scheduled requests for absence from the clinical area must be made in writing to the Assistant Program Director of the DNP Nurse Anesthesia program, Instructor of Record, and/or clinical preceptor in accordance with program specific guidelines. A student's absence from the clinical area is not excused unless it is approved by the Assistant Program Director of the DNP Nurse Anesthesia program or by the Instructor of Record for all other programs. All requested clinical time-off, including time off for illness, must be reconciled with the Instructor of Record or by the Assistant Program Director DNP Nurse Anesthesia program.
  - In the event of illness, the anesthesia student must notify three individuals: 1) Clinical Coordinator, 2) anesthesia preceptor they are scheduled to be with on the respective day, and 3) the Assistant

Director of the Nurse Anesthesia Program. For all other students, notify the clinical preceptor and instructor as early as possible.

*a. Severe Weather Policy*

If a student feels it is unsafe to travel during inclement weather, they should not attempt to do so and are under no obligation to attend clinical. The site and Program Director should be notified as soon as possible if clinical will be missed. Class sessions missed due to inclement weather will be rescheduled. It is the student's responsibility to reschedule clinical time that is missed due to inclement weather.

*b. Reporting Clinical Events*

Any clinical event resulting in a potential or actual adverse patient outcome or threatens patient safety must be documented. The goal is to further educational development regarding the identification and documentation of clinical events as they pertain to patient safety. Students are required to report any witnessed injury, breach in patient safety, or poor patient outcome in which they are involved. Anesthesia students should notify as quickly as possible (no greater than 24 hours) the Assistant Director of the Nurse Anesthesia Program.

Students are also required to complete the **Clinical Event Report** form and submit it **within 48 hours** of any unusual event or in the discovery of any unusual event in the clinical area. The appropriate WCU faculty/administrator will review the report. A conference including faculty/administrator and the student may be held to address a Clinical Event Report as needed.

A serious infraction of patient safety by a student is grounds for possible probation and/or dismissal from the program. Failure of the student to submit a Clinical Event Report for an unusual clinical event within 48 hours of the event, or the discovery of the event, may result in possible probation and/or dismissal from the program.

### **III. STUDENT DEVELOPMENT**

#### **A. Organizations**

Students are encouraged to take advantage of the opportunities to become involved in governance within the SON, CHHS, and WCU. Campus organizations offer a wide variety of activities and learning experiences, as well as the opportunity to develop leadership skills and a peer network. Students are encouraged to keep academic schedule needs and student involvement responsibilities in balance. The following nursing organizations are registered with WCU Student Affairs.

*i. 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/>.

***ii. 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. More information is available at [www.nursingsociety.org](http://www.nursingsociety.org).

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

NCNA is open to Registered Nurse students. Yearly dues provide membership at the national, state, and local level. In addition to membership benefits inherent in the association's purpose, members receive the Tar Heel Nurse, The American Nurse, continuing education opportunities, involvement in community activities, and reduced rates for the annual state convention. Students are welcome at NCNA meetings. More information is available at [www.ncnurses.org](http://www.ncnurses.org).

***iv. American Association of Nurse Practitioners (AANP)***

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

***v. American Association of Nurse Anesthetists (AANA)***

Founded in 1931, the American Association of Nurse Anesthetists (AANA) is the professional association representing more than 40,000 Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists (CRNAs) and student nurse anesthetists nationwide. More information is available [www.aana.com](http://www.aana.com).

***vi. American Organization of Nurse Leaders (AONL)***

AONE provides leadership, professional development, advocacy and research to advance nursing practice and patient care, promote nursing leadership excellence and shape health care public policy. More information is available at [www.aonl.org](http://www.aonl.org).

***vii. North Carolina Organization of Nurse Leaders (NCONL)***

NCONL serves as a voice for nurse leaders; provides venues for professional development and advocacy; facilitates research and its application to advance

nursing practice and health care policy; and serves as a catalyst for transforming patient care. Discounted graduate student memberships are available. More information is available at [www.nconl.org](http://www.nconl.org).

***viii. National League for Nursing (NLN)***

Dedicated to excellence in nursing education, the National League for Nursing is the preferred membership organization for nurse faculty and leaders in nursing education. NLN members include nurse educators, education agencies, health care agencies, and interested members of the public. The NLN offers faculty development programs. More information is available at [www.nln.org](http://www.nln.org).

***ix. WCU Graduate Student Association – Campus-wide***

WCU has an active Graduate Student Association. Contact the Graduate School for information on involvement, activities, and benefits.

***x. Graduate Nursing Student Academy (GNSA)***

The American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) formed the Graduate Nursing Student Academy. The purpose is to provide high value programs, services, and resources to nursing students enrolled in master's and doctoral programs. Through the GNSA, AACN focuses on meeting the professional development needs of graduate nursing students who are poised to assume leadership roles within the profession, including service as future faculty members and researchers. Membership is free to WCU nursing students. Visit the [www.aacnnursing.org/gnsa](http://www.aacnnursing.org/gnsa) for more information.

***xi. North Carolina Association of Nurse Anesthetists (NCANA)***

Founded in 1941, the North Carolina Association of Nurse Anesthetists promotes and advances CRNA practice and access to high quality care through member engagement, education, partnerships and advocacy. More information is available at <https://www.facebook.com/NCANA1941/>.

**B. Committees and Engagement**

***i. Graduate Curriculum Committee (GCC)***

The Curriculum Committee is composed of faculty and a graduate student from each program (DNP, NA, FNP, NE and NL). Students serve in an advisory capacity. Student representatives are elected by their peers or appointed by faculty at the beginning of the academic year. This committee usually meets monthly during the academic year to evaluate and further develop policies and procedures related to curriculum, to ensure conformity with current standards, and to provide leadership in developing the framework and design of the curriculum.

***ii. Graduate Student Affairs Committee (GSAC)***

The Student Affairs Committee is composed of faculty members and a graduate student from each program (DNP, NA, FNP, NE and NL). Students serve in an advisory capacity. The student representatives are elected by their peers or appointed by faculty at the beginning of the academic year. Duties of this committee include annually reviewing policies and procedures concerning

admission to the professional nursing program at all levels 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 Nursing School.

***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. DNP Advisory/Oversight Committee***

The purpose of the DNP Advisory/Oversight Committee is to examine any issues or business related to the Dual DNP Program between UNC Charlotte and Western Carolina University. Students provide valuable feedback for the improvement and continued success of this joint program. The DNP Advisory/Oversight Committee is composed of the DNP Program Director/Coordinator, two additional elected DNP program faculty members from each school who are involved in practice, a DNP student representative from each School, and as Ex-officio members, the WCU Director of Graduate Programs, and the UNCC Associate Director of the Graduate Division.

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

Students may be invited to attend or participate in special events hosted by the University or its partners. Faculty are given the right to assign participation in these events within their courses. Students are encouraged to take advantage of these opportunities of personal and professional growth.

***vi. Travel Abroad***

The Office of International Studies is the University's source of information for sponsored study abroad opportunities. Presently there are not study abroad opportunities to fulfill the upper-level nursing requirements. Students interested in pursuing a study abroad experience should contact the Office of International Studies ([studyabroad.wcu.edu](http://studyabroad.wcu.edu)).

Individual programs may coordinate service abroad opportunities each year. Students interested in a service abroad opportunity should speak with their faculty advisor. Announcements regarding these experiences will be made at the program level or through Blackboard.

**C. Scholarships, Loans, and Grants**

Students can receive financial aid through public, private, and employer related funds. Recipients of financial aid are expected to comply with the guidelines and requirements by the agency or donor awarding the funds.

***i. Federal Aid***

Students must submit a *Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)* to be eligible to receive federal financial aid. Questions regarding this application should be directed to the WCU Financial Aid Office. More information is available at the WCU Financial Aid Office's website.

***ii. Scholarships***

Students can learn more about scholarship opportunities through WCU by visiting the [ScholarCat.wcu.edu](http://ScholarCat.wcu.edu). As most scholarships funded by private individuals or groups these funds are often contingent upon funding from outside sources. Most scholarships require recipients to be in good standing with their declared major or program while maintaining at least a 3.00 average for eligibility.

***iii. Health Care Agencies***

Several local 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 from the personnel office of your employing health care agency.

**D. Career Planning**

***i. WCU's Center for Career and Professional Development***

The WCU Center for Career and Professional Development helps students and alumni identify employment opportunities, refine interviewing skills, and update application materials. Students are encouraged to meet with Center for Career and Professional Development periodically throughout their college experience. To set up an appointment students can call 828-227-7133 or visit the Center for Career and Professional Development website.

***ii. Letters of Reference***

Letters of reference are common requirements for job applications. Students who ask faculty or staff members for letters of reference should ask before submitting the individual's name as a reference. Students should be courteous and provide the reference writer with ample time to fulfill the request. While faculty and staff are often glad to assist with references there is no obligation for them to do so.

**E. Graduation**

***i. Commencement***

A University Commencement Ceremony (Graduation) is held at the end of the spring and fall semesters. The University will also provide students with information concerning the graduation ceremonies, rehearsals, ordering caps and gowns.

***ii. Scholastic Status Check***

Students are expected to know the information in the catalog and their degree audit to verify their graduation status. This includes students running a degree

audit each semester to ensure courses are counting towards their major requirements as needed.

If a student has questions regarding how or where a course applies they should speak with their faculty advisor. 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 apply 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.

***iv. Requirements for Graduation***

To qualify for graduation students must complete the required coursework and the student's committee will need to have signed off on the Graduate Project/Thesis or the DNP Clinical Scholarly Project. The student must also successfully complete any comprehensive exams required by their program.

***v. School of Nursing Convocation***

The SON hosts a Convocation event each fall and spring semester prior to the University-wide Commencement to recognize students who have successfully completed one of the SON programs. This event 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 goals.

During this event MS(N) and DNP students are hooded and SON awards are presented. Only graduates may cross the stage at Convocation unless prior approval is given by the Director of the School of Nursing. Students graduating in August may participate in the preceding May SON Convocation Ceremony but do not participate in the University Commencement until the following December. Information about this event will be provided by the Office of Student Services.

***vi. Additional Graduation Information***

Information will be provided in MS(N) Homeplace and via Catamount email about ordering graduation regalia and graduate nursing pins (optional). Following degree conferral, required signatures for certification examinations may be obtained from the Director of the School of Nursing.

**F. Awards for Graduating Students**

The SON recognizes outstanding graduates through a variety of awards presented at the SON Convocation or at the College of Health and Human Sciences awards ceremony. Nursing faculty nominate eligible graduates. Information may be solicited from the

nominees to facilitate faculty voting on the recipients. Awards may be initiated or added to by alumni and friends of the SON; contact the SON Director to make arrangements.

***i. The Deitz Outstanding Student Award***

The Dr. Vivian Deitz award is given to a graduate student who, by vote of the faculty, is considered an outstanding student in nursing practice. This award is given in honor of Dr. Vivian Deitz, former Department Head of the WCU School of Nursing.

***ii. MS(N) Faculty Award***

This award is given to a graduate nursing student who has accomplished outstanding academic performance. The student must have a GPA in the top 20% of her/his class. The student must have actively participated on graduate committees or worked as a graduate assistant for the MS(N) program. Graduate nursing faculty will nominate and select the recipient of this award.

***iii. Outstanding Family Nurse Practitioner Award***

This award is given to a Nurse Practitioner student who has demonstrated academic excellence and superior clinical performance. Students eligible for this award must have a GPA in the top 20% of her/his class and have superior evaluations from clinical preceptors. Family Nurse Practitioner Program faculty will nominate and select the recipient of this award.

***iv. Outstanding Nurse Educator Award***

This award is given to a Nurse Educator student who has demonstrated academic excellence and superior performance during her/his practicum. Students eligible for this award must have a GPA in the top 20% of her/his class and have superior evaluations from clinical preceptors. Nurse Educator Program faculty will nominate and select the recipient of this award.

***v. Outstanding Nurse Anesthesia Award***

This award is given to a Nurse Anesthesia student who has demonstrated academic excellence and superior clinical performance. Students eligible for this award must have a GPA in the top 20% of her/his class and have superior evaluations from clinical preceptors. Nurse Anesthesia Program didactic and clinical faculty will nominate and select the recipient of this award.

***vi. Outstanding Nursing Leadership Award***

This award is given to a Nurse Leadership student who has demonstrated academic excellence and superior performance during her/his practicum. Students eligible for this award must have a GPA in the top 20% of her/his class and have superior evaluations from clinical preceptors. Nursing Leadership Program faculty will nominate and select the recipient of this award.

***vii. Outstanding Post-Master's DNP Award***

This award is given to a Post-Master's Doctor of Nursing Practice student who has demonstrated academic excellence and superior leadership skills. Students eligible for this award must have a GPA in the top 20% of her/his class and demonstrated exceptional leadership in the program as evidenced by serving on Program and/or School Committees, engagement in professional organizations, or assuming a leadership role in her/his practice setting. The Post-Master's DNP Program faculty will nominate and select the recipient of this award.

*viii. Additional awards*

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

**G. Alumni**

Graduates are encouraged to join the School of Nursing Alumni Association to continue their involvement with the SON and its growth. To maintain up-to-date records of alumni, graduates are asked to keep the SON and the University informed of current addresses and employment. Graduates are encouraged to recommend qualified students into the SON and to support the School's current students and special projects.

**Appendix A**

**Western Carolina University  
Academic Warning**

Student:

Course:

Term:

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

Didactic:

Practicum:

Assignment	Due Date	Status

**Recommendations by faculty for improvement:**

Student (signed): \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Faculty (electronic signature): \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Copy of completed form to:**

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

**Appendix B**  
**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 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 many people do not know they are infected and medical history and examination cannot reliably identify all people infected with bloodborne pathogens.
- OSHA mandates 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.

a. *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.

b. *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.

c. *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.

d. *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 likely to generate splashes or splatters of blood or other body fluids.
- iv. Appropriate protective gowns or aprons must be worn during procedures 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., needle stick;
- 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 at 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, from the student's physician/health care provider, or the WCU Health Services. The faculty should remind the student to follow the procedures and/or recommendations of the individual(s) providing the medical evaluation. The student shall be responsible for any health care fees or charges associated with implementation of this policy. If the student refuses a medical evaluation, the faculty member will record this declination in the student's School record. The faculty member will record likewise the exposure incident in the student's School record.
3. Any incident involving a student, should be report to the agency/facility liaison where the incident occurred. Faculty will work with the agency/facility liaison to complete any agency/facility required documentation related to the incident.

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

1. Documentation of the route(s) of exposure, and the circumstances under which the exposure incident occurred.
2. Identification and documentation of the source individual, unless the School or the clinical agency can establish 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 document 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 the Office of Safety and Risk Management's *Biological Safety Manual, Section 9* and has been adapted for students in the SON.

## **Appendix C**

### **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 allowing for the creation and exchange of user-generated content which is disseminated through social interaction using various platforms. When publishing information on social media sites students should remain aware the information is available for anyone to see, cannot be permanently deleted, and can be traced back to its source.

Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Social media and networking
- Photo- and video-sharing
- Micro-blogs
- Forums and discussion boards

#### **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 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.
- 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 it is clear they are not speaking for WCU, unless you have been authorized to do so in writing.
- 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).

**Appendix D**  
**COLLEGE OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SCIENCES & GRADUATE 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. As a condition of participation in the Program I knowingly and voluntarily consent 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 all drug testing results to the Dean of the College of Health and Human Sciences and clinical partners as needed.

<i>Student Name:</i>	<i>Student Signature:</i>	<i>Date:</i>
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**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.**

<i>Student Name:</i>	<i>Student Signature:</i>	<i>Date:</i>
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**Graduate Nursing Student Handbook Agreement:** I acknowledge I have received and read the Graduate 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.

<i>Student Name:</i>	<i>Student Signature:</i>	<i>Date:</i>
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*Continued*

**Student Information Release Authorization**

**DIRECTIONS:** In compliance with FERPA, and the University’s Policy on Access to Student Education Records [www.wcu.edu/learn/academic-services/registrar-office/transcripts/ferpa.aspx](http://www.wcu.edu/learn/academic-services/registrar-office/transcripts/ferpa.aspx), the University is prohibited from providing certain information from your student records to a third party, including academic records, test scores, program status, and license application information.

In order for the College of Health and Human Sciences to release information for the purpose of arranging clinical experiences, internships, or field placements, you must complete the following authorization form.

**This release authorization is intended for the release of information maintained by the:**  
 College of Health and Human Sciences | 3971 Little Savannah Road | Cullowhee, NC 28723

<b>SECTION A: Student Information</b>	
Name (Last, First, Middle Initial)	Student ID Number
<b>SECTION B: Third-Party Receiving Information</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prospective placement sites for clinical experiences, internships, or field placements;</li> <li>• Relevant licensing and credentialing board(s); and/or</li> <li>• Other entities as specified here:                      _____</li> </ul>	
<b>SECTION C: Purpose</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arrangement of clinical experiences, internships, or field placements; and/or</li> <li>• Recommendations for licensure or credentialing</li> </ul>	
<b>SECTION D: Records to be Disclosed (as needed)</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Academic and clinical records, including prior clinical performance outcomes</li> <li>• Test scores</li> <li>• Program status, including prior disciplinary action resulting in suspension or removal from the program</li> <li>• Information shared in applications to the University, Graduate School, College, Department, or specific program</li> </ul>	
<b>SECTION D: Certification</b>	
<p>I authorize the College of Health and Human Sciences to disclose and discuss confidential information from my education record with the above third parties, named in Section B, for the purposes named in Section C.</p> <p>This authorization shall be considered as a waiver of any and all of my rights and/or privileges as provided under the Family Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, as amended. A photocopy of this authorization shall be considered as valid as the originally signed document.</p>	
Student’s Signature	Date

\* **NOTE:** For the third-party designees named on this form, this release overrides all FERPA directory suppression information that you have set up in your student record.