

# **Post-Licensure Nursing Student Handbook**

**2020-2021**

Supplemental to  
*WCU Undergraduate 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 *Post-Licensure Nursing Student Handbook***

Students in the School of Nursing (SON) are responsible for reading and understanding the information contained in the *Post-Licensure Student Handbook* and adhering to any policy changes and/or updates in subsequent editions. Each student is responsible for reading the *Post-Licensure Student Handbook* and submit a signed copy of the Student Handbook Agreement upon admission to their respective nursing program. The signed copy will be placed in the student's file. The Student Handbook Agreement is in the appendices of this document.

### **I. THE WESTERN CAROLINA UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF NURSING**

#### **A. Introduction to Western Carolina University**

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

The WCU Undergraduate Catalog 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 Undergraduate 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 in Nursing (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 program in 1999. Since then, tracks have been added in Nurse Leadership, Nurse Educator, and Nurse Anesthesia. 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 as 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 transitioned 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 Post Licensure BSN Programs**

#### ***i. RN to BSN Program***

This program awards a BSN degree to individuals with diplomas or associate degrees who currently hold a license to practice as a Registered Nurse (RN). Students are admitted during the fall and spring semesters annually. Coursework is conducted online through WCU's Distance Learning Program. Clinical experiences are no longer a required part of the program's curriculum. Additional information can be found at [rntobsn.wcu.edu](http://rntobsn.wcu.edu).

#### ***ii. RN to MS(N) Early Entry Option***

This option is designed to assist RNs with good academic records to move smoothly through the RN to BSN curriculum into a MS(N) program. The RN to MS(N) Early Entry Option is currently available for WCU's Nurse Educator and Nursing Leadership programs. RN to BSN students may apply for consideration after completing 12 hours of the RN to BSN curriculum.

If accepted, 500-level core graduate nursing courses will be included to satisfy the elective credit requirement within the RN to BSN curriculum. Students will maintain undergraduate status until completion of their BSN. Approval for this option does *not* guarantee admission into the master's program. Students should refer to this handbook, their RN to BSN advisor, and the coordinator of the RN to MSN Early Entry Option for questions about this program.

**iii. Regionally Increasing Baccalaureate Nurses (RIBN) Program**

The RIBN program a collaboration between WCU's SON and select local North Carolina Community Colleges (NCCC). Students must meet institution and program admission requirements at both WCU and the NCCC. For the first three years of the RIBN program students will be dually enrolled, taking courses at WCU while completing their Associate Degree in Nursing (ADN) at their NCCC institution. Students are required to complete a minimum of one course through WCU every three semesters, summer included, to maintain enrollment at WCU. After graduating from their NCCC ADN program and successful passing of the NCLEX students will complete their fourth year of the RIBN program through two full-time semesters at WCU. Fourth year students do not have clinical experience requirements.

Current Partners of WCU's RIBN program are Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College (ABTech), Southwestern Community College (SCC), BlueRidge Community College (BRCC), and Isothermal Community College (ICC). Information on the RIBN program can be found at [RIBN.wcu.edu](http://RIBN.wcu.edu).

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

**i. Mission**

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

**ii. Vision**

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

**iii. Philosophy**

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

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

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.

## **F. Program Outcomes and Curriculum**

### *i. Post Licensure Program Outcomes*

Upon Completion of the BSN curriculum offered in the RN to BSN or RIBN programs graduates will be able to:

- Utilize effective communication (oral written and nonverbal) to support the development of therapeutic relationships with colleagues and clients in diverse healthcare settings.
- Use the nursing process to support clinical reasoning to provide holistic, patient and family centered care to diverse populations in a variety of settings.
- Engage in effective interactions with colleagues, other members of the health care team as well as patients and families toward a unified goal of high quality patient outcomes.
- Demonstrate nursing practice that is rooted in ethical behaviors, caring actions and professional comportment.
- Utilize technology and information systems to critically evaluate and analyze data to support.

### *ii. RN to BSN Curriculum*

The RN to BSN required courses are in four part-time semesters of six credit hours. An additional 6 credit hours of 300-400 level electives are required and can be built into the student's curriculum.

*a. Introductory Semester*

This semester must be taken prior to the other three within the RN to BSN program. After consultation with the student's faculty advisor an elective course may be added.

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

*b. Community Health Semester*

This semester may be taken as the second or third block as directed by the student's faculty advisor. Most students will complete an Upper Level Elective during this semester.

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

*c. Leadership Semester*

This semester may be taken as the second or third block as directed by the student's faculty advisor. Most students will complete an Upper Level Elective during this semester.

- NSG 460 – *Nursing Leadership I: Theory* (3 hrs)
- NSG 483 – *Nursing Leadership II: Practicum* (2 hrs)
- NSG 305 – *Nursing Leadership III: Intervention Project* (1 hr)

*d. Research Semester*

This semester is taken as the final, or capstone, semester of the RN to BSN program.

- NSG 471 – *Nursing Research I: Research Process* (2 hrs)
- NSG 472 – *Nursing Research II: Critical Reading* (2 hrs)
- NSG 473 – *Nursing Research III: Clinical Application* (2 hrs)

*e. Electives Requirement*

Six hours of upper division (3-400 level) electives are required to be taken at WCU to meet the University's graduation requirements. Students in the RN to MS(N) Early Entry Option will take 500 level core graduate nursing courses to satisfy this requirement.

**iii. RIBN Curriculum**

Upon admission to the RIBN program students will complete a zero-credit orientation course, UE 101, through WCU. RIBN students should complete an online elective or liberal studies course through WCU during each of their first three years in the program. Some of these courses must be taken at the 3-400 level to satisfy the University's graduation requirements.

Students must complete NSG 346 –*Pathophysiology for Nursing* at WCU prior to entering the 3<sup>rd</sup> year of the program. The 4<sup>th</sup> year curriculum is completed exclusively at WCU.

a. *Fall Semester*

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

b. *Spring Semester*

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

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

Students are responsible for following the SON policies as presented in this document. A form acknowledging the receipt of the information in this Handbook is found in the appendices of this document. Students are required to sign and submit this agreement to the SON to be filed in their student file.

As noted in the WCU Undergraduate Catalog, the SON reserves the right to modify school policies and procedures. Students should periodically consult their nursing faculty advisor to obtain 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 University informed of any changes to their address, phone numbers, and email address. These can be updated in the MyWCU portal.

### **A. General Information**

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

Admission and progression for WCU's post-licensure programs vary. Applicants are expected to review the information provided in this handbook and on WCU's website for the most up to date information. Admitted students are expected to maintain a running calculation of their performance within each course and as they progress through their program's curriculum.

Students who elect to withdraw from a course or the University are responsible for following the WCU deadlines, policies, and procedures. Failure to follow withdrawal procedures may result in the student earning a failing grade. Students who are dismissed are provided the opportunity to appeal their dismissal (*see*

*Appeals, II.A.ii.m.)* or to seek readmission to their program. Information regarding the readmission process for each program is provided below.

*a. RN to BSN Admission*

Admission criteria for the RN to BSN program can be found at [rntobsn.wcu.edu](http://rntobsn.wcu.edu). To be considered for admission students must complete all science prerequisites, complete or waive all liberal studies requirements, transfer at least 60 non-nursing credits, and maintain current RN licensure. Students who meet all prerequisite requirements except for one Liberal Studies Perspective course may be accepted into the program provided one of their Upper Level Electives will be used to satisfy this requirement. Students must submit the program application and apply for admission through WCU's Distance Learning. Admission to WCU does not guarantee admission to the RN to BSN program. Program admission decisions will be made at the discretion of the Post-License Student Affairs Committee.

The UNC system has implemented an articulation agreement with all North Carolina Community Colleges (UNCC) for all students beginning an Associate Degree in Nursing (ADN) program during or after the fall 2015 semester. This agreement waives liberal studies requirements for students who graduate with their ADN provided the student completed the block plan required by the articulation agreement.

*b. Progression in the RN to BSN Program*

Students who fail to demonstrate satisfactory progress in a course, or the program, will receive documentation of their academic warning and recommendation to meet with their academic advisor to discuss academic assistance and resources. After the consultation, the faculty member will sign a copy of the *Academic Warning Form* (Appendix C) and provide it to the student with information regarding areas of improvement and success strategies. The student will have one week to sign and return the form. A copy will be placed in the student's folder and distributed to the Program Director and faculty advisor. A template of the *Academic Warning Form* is found in *Appendix C* of this document.

A RN to BSN student must maintain a 2.5 cumulative GPA and maintain a current RN license. Students who receive a grade of C-, D, F, or U in a required course, including upper-level electives, will be suspended from the program for one semester. Prior to the end of the suspension term the student will be required to send a letter reviewing the previous semester's academic performance to the Program Director. This letter should also include changes or strategies the student will implement to successfully progress in the program. A second semester of unsatisfactory progress will result in dismissal from the RN to BSN program.

*c. Readmission to the RN to BSN Program*

Students in good standing who are not consecutively enrolled for 3 or more semesters, including summer, must reapply to the University and the RN to BSN program. As mentioned in Section *II.A.i.b*, students seeking readmission are required to submit a statement of academic intent to the Program Director for review. This statement should include a description of challenges faced in the past, changes the student has made, and how the student plans to succeed in the program moving forward. Readmission requests must be sent to the Director of Student Services or the Program Director no later than 30-days prior to the start of the desired reentry semester. Readmission will be based on the student's previous performance, faculty recommendations, and space available.

If a student withdraws from the Introductory Semester they will be required to submit a new application for admission consideration. Admission for students who do not register for or complete the Introductory Semester will **not** automatically be deferred.

As mentioned in Section *II.A.i.e.*, students with unsatisfactory progress in two semesters are permanently dismissed from the program.

*d. RIBN Admission*

Students must meet the admission requirements of the collaborative community college and WCU. Specific details are provided in the application materials available from the Student Success Advisor (SSA) at the collaborative community college.

*e. Progression in the RIBN Program*

To demonstrate satisfactory progress within the RIBN program students will complete the general studies and required courses to earn their Associate Degree of Nursing (ADN) through years one to three at their community college. During this time students, will be expected to complete a minimum of one course through WCU every three (3) semesters. These courses are to include NSG 346, *Nursing Pathophysiology*, and upper level liberal studies courses. Students should maintain a schedule consistent with the articulation agreement agreed upon by their community college.

Progression at the community college level is contingent upon following the policies set forth in the handbook and community college catalog at the student's institution. Students should adhere to all guidelines found in the syllabus, catalog, and institutional policies. The professional behaviors outlined by the ANA Code of Ethics should always be maintained. Students will need to purchase and maintain all required materials and meet all organizational requirements to participate in the clinical experiences.

After completing the third year and earning their ADN, RIBN students must successfully pass the NCLEX prior to beginning the fourth year of the program. During their fourth year, students will enroll full-time at WCU to complete their Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree. Students may work but are encouraged to not work full-time to allow for successful completion of their coursework.

Academic progress is determined by the performance at both WCU and at the community college level. Students must maintain a 2.5 cumulative GPA and demonstrate safe nursing practice. Courses must be passed with a grade of C or better at both the community college and WCU. Students in the first year of the program can repeat a course to improve an unsatisfactory grade. This must be completed prior to the start of their second year.

During years two and three of the RIBN program, failure to achieve a C or better in any course will result in dismissal from the RIBN track. Please note the following:

- i. Some courses are only taught during certain semesters. For example, CHM 132 may only be taught during a spring term. If a grade of C or higher isn't met and the course cannot be completed prior to the fall semester the student will be dismissed from the RIBN program.
- ii. Incomplete grades must be resolved prior to the start of the next semester in the RIBN curriculum.
- iii. Students should not drop or withdraw from a course without consulting with the SSA and the RIBN Program Director at WCU.

Students who fail to meet the academic or clinical requirements outlined by WCU and their community college will be dismissed from RIBN. These students may be allowed by their community college to continue in their ADN program.

During year four of the RIBN program, students who fail to demonstrate satisfactory progress in a course, or the program, will receive documentation of their academic warning and recommendation to meet with their academic advisor to discuss academic assistance and resources. After the consultation, the faculty member will sign a copy of the *Academic Warning Form* (Appendix C) and provide it to the student with information regarding areas of improvement and success strategies. The student will have one week to sign and return the form. A copy will be placed in the student's file and distributed to the Program Director and faculty advisor.

*f. Readmission to the RIBN Program*

Readmission for students who have been dismissed from the RIBN program varies depending on the point of the program at which they were dismissed.

Students who were dismissed in their first year must submit a new application to their SSA during the regular admissions cycle. A current GPA will be calculated and used within the application ranking process. Readmission into the RIBN program will be decided by ranking the student with the other applicants as appropriate for each institution.

Students applying for readmission into years two, three, or four are required to submit a written request for readmission to the WCU RIBN Program Director no later than 30-days prior to the start of the desired reentry semester. The written request for readmission must include an analysis of why the student did not progress and a plan for success addressing strategies for improvement. Students should consult with their community college's nursing department for their institutions' specific readmission policy.

The committee reserves the right to interview the student seeking readmission, as well as the right to require the student to comply with additional requirements or conditions as deemed appropriate. Readmission to RIBN is based on the availability of seats within the program.

Students who receive unsatisfactory grades (C- or below) in two or more nursing courses are not eligible for readmission to the RIBN program.

*g. Maintenance of Current Licensure*

Students in the RN to BSN program and the 4<sup>th</sup> year of the RIBN program are responsible to maintain continuous state licensure as an RN while in the program.

**ii. Academic Information**

*a. Orientation*

Students in the RN to BSN program and the RIBN program are not required to attend WCU's general student orientation. However, students in these programs are required to attend program orientation sessions. These sessions may be conducted face-to-face or online. Failure to attend orientation will result in a forfeiture of admission.

*b. Grading Standards*

The SON uses the grading scale below for all non-clinical BSN courses required in the major. Learning experience courses and independent study are graded as Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory courses. Elective courses are at the discretion of the instructor.

A+ = 100 - 97.50	A = 97.49 - 92.50	A- = 92.49 - 90.50
B+ = 90.49 - 87.50	B = 87.49 - 84.50	B- = 84.49 - 82.50
C+ = 82.49 - 78.50	C = 78.49 - 76.50	C- = 76.49 - 74.50
D+ = 74.49 - 71.50	D = 71.49 - 68.50	D- = 68.49 - 66.50
	F = 66.49 - 0	

Make-up work or extra-credit is generally not provided for low or failing grades. Faculty will respond in a timely manner to requests for verification of grade accuracy.

*c. Transfer of Nursing Credits*

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

The WCU *Undergraduate Catalog* states, “there is no time limit on the course work accepted for undergraduate transfer credit. However, students who plan to schedule courses with stated prerequisites should consider auditing the prerequisite courses if no work has been attempted in the field within the past five years.” The student must also go through the admissions process to the program and have met all the prerequisites.

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

All WCU students are required to earn 25% of the credits required for their program as upper-division (3-400) credits at WCU. This requirement, known as residency, is met through the program curriculum and upper

level electives. If a student receives transfer credit for a course within the program curriculum, another upper division course at WCU may be required to satisfy graduation requirements.

*d. Credit by Examination*

The SON adheres to the WCU policy set forth in the WCU Undergraduate Catalog. Students in this program interested in earning credit by examination should consult with their Faculty Advisor and the Office of Student Services to determine if it is advantageous pursue this path.

*e. Format for all Student Documents*

All scholarly assignments must be submitted in the formatting style of the most current edition of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Associations* style guide, also known as APA format.

Written assignments should be submitted within blackboard as a **Word** document. Students should *not* submit assignments as email attachments to instructors. The following name format should be used for all course documents unless directed otherwise by the instructor:

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

*f. Computer Requirement*

Students are required to have a computer for use throughout the RIBN or RN to BSN programs. Due to the online nature of these programs students should ensure they have an up-to-date system with access to a reliable internet connection. Students should review the College of Health and Human Sciences computer requirements on the [WCU Information Technology website](#).

*g. Online Testing Software*

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

*h. Use of References for Assignments*

Students are expected to use references no older than five (5) years. For deviations from this policy, the student must consult the faculty. The standard citation and reference manual for the SON is the most current edition of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*.

*i. Penalties*

All papers have a due date and time. Work submitted after the deadline will lose a minimum of 5% for each calendar day (including weekends) it is late. After seven calendar days, the assignment may not be accepted and a grade of 0 may be given. In courses graded S/U all written work must be submitted to the satisfaction of the professor or the student will receive a grade of U in the course.

*j. Faculty Office Hours*

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

*k. Advising*

Each post-licensure student will be assigned to a nursing faculty advisor. Each student must make an appointment to meet with the advisor before registration and whenever assistance is needed. Most faculty advisor appointments are only available during the 9-month academic year.

**The responsibility of registering for classes, dropping classes, completing curriculum and graduation requirements rests with the student, not the advisor.**

*The student advisee is expected to:*

- Consult the WCU Undergraduate Catalog to become familiar with procedures and deadlines.
- Attend the required advising session on or near Advising Day.
- Do preliminary planning and 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.
- Keep the advisor informed about academic difficulties as they occur.
- Ask about changing advisors if the assigned advisor is not meeting the student's needs.
- Complete any requested evaluations of the advising process and advisor.

*The Nursing Faculty Advisor is expected to:*

- Communicate availability to students.
- Help students find answers to questions regarding Liberal Studies and major requirements.
- Assist students with identifying campus resources, and understanding academic polices such as the grade point average,

effect of repeats and withdrawals, probation status, and the readmission process.

- Maintain confidentiality.
- Assist students in exploring alternative academic and career options as necessary.

*l. Registration*

Dates, materials, and instructions for registration are published in the WCU Undergraduate Catalog and the Office of the Registrar's website. The Schedule of Classes for upcoming semesters are made available by the Registrar prior to advising day. Fall and Summer schedules are made available in late February. Spring schedules are made available in late October. The list of courses offered can be found within a student's MyWCU and at [schedule.wcu.edu](http://schedule.wcu.edu). Schedules are subject to change up to the beginning of the semester.

Students in the RN to BSN program will not require an ALT-pin for registration. Students in the final year of the RIBN program must speak to their faculty advisor to obtain their access number (ALT-Pin) to register for courses.

Elective and liberal studies courses frequently reach capacity shortly after opening. To ensure progression within their program students are encouraged to register promptly. Failure to do so may postpone a student's expected graduation date.

**ii. Student Complaints/Grievance Information**

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

*a. WCU's Dean of Students Complaints and Concerns*

The WCU Dean of Students office maintains a webpage for Complaints and Concerns which provides definitions, examples, and portals to report comments, complaints, concerns, and occurrences of bias, discrimination, or intimidation. This page can be found at

<https://www.wcu.edu/experience/dean-of-students/complaints-and-concerns.aspx>

*b. Sexual 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

<https://www.wcu.edu/discover/leadership/office-of-the-chancellor/legal->

[counsel-office/university-policies/numerical-index/university-policy-129.aspx](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. The University definitions and processes can be found at

<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 program if it can be shown that the grade or program dismissal was assigned arbitrarily or impermissibly. A student who wishes to appeal a final 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 WCU Undergraduate Catalog Under the [Academic Action Appeal Policy](#).

*e. 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. 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 School of Nursing, the University, and in their careers.

Nursing students are held to the Western Carolina University Academic Honesty Policy, published in the Undergraduate Catalog's *Academic Integrity Policy* section.

Dishonesty will not be tolerated. Professors have the right to determine the appropriate sanction or sanctions for an incident of academic dishonesty. Acts of academic dishonesty may result in penalties ranging from a grade

of zero on the paper/project/test, a “U” in a clinical course, failure of the course, and/or immediate dismissal from the program. Circumstances of the act of academic dishonesty and consequent sanctions will be documented in the student’s academic file and reported to the SON Director in accordance with WCU policy.

Examples of academic dishonesty 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. Self-plagiarism is the use of one’s own previous work in another context without proper citation.
- **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)

Tips on how to avoid plagiarism are available through WCU’s Tutoring Services website on the Writing Support page.

*b. Social Media Policy*

See *Appendix B*.

*c. Policy on Attendance*

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

Students are expected to attend all scheduled learning activities, such as orientation, lectures, learning experiences, evaluation, conferences, and other activities as scheduled by faculty. No other activities are to be planned that conflict with scheduled learning activities. The professor must approve any exceptions to the attendance policy in advance.

Online course attendance may be maintained through online discussion boards, participation in video lectures, or web meetings. Students should approach these with the same expectations as a face-to-face course.

*d. Examinations*

Students are expected to complete examinations on the scheduled dates. If a student is unable to take a scheduled exam they must notify the professor of the anticipated absence prior to the exam. Failure to notify the professor may result in a grade of zero for that exam. Faculty, in consultation with the respective Program Director, will evaluate patterns of missed exams individually.

In the case of an approved absence the student is responsible for coordinating with the professor to make-up the exam. Make-up exams should take place within one week of the originally scheduled exam. Failure to make up the exam at the rescheduled time will result in the grade of zero for the exam. The timing and format of the make-up exam is at the discretion of the instructor. Class time will not be used for make-up exams.

*e. 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 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 a student, has been admitted to the program, they may 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.

If a student requires accommodation due to a stated disability, the disability must be documented through the Office of Accessibility Resources. 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.

*f. 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 students can be academically sanctioned, disciplined, or dismissed from the nursing major.

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

- An act or behavior of the type that is prohibited by the *North Carolina Nursing Practice Act or Administrative Code* (available online at [www.ncbon.org](http://www.ncbon.org)).
- An act or behavior that violates the American Nurses Association statement of ethical standards, the Code of Ethics for Nurses (available online at [www.nursingworld.org](http://www.nursingworld.org)).
- An act or behavior that threatens, or has the potential to threaten, the physical, emotional, mental, or environmental safety of the patient, family member, another student, faculty member, other health care provider, or any member of the public.
- An act or behavior that constitutes a practice a student is not prepared, authorized, or permitted to perform.
- An act or behavior that interferes with the learning environment.

Professional ethics and North Carolina law require a nurse to protect patients from unsafe practice. Thus, the nursing student is obligated to reveal to nursing faculty her/his own or others' questionable conduct that might interfere with safe professional practice.

If a student is academically sanctioned and/or removed from the learning environment due to a behavioral problem, a conference will then be scheduled to include the student, faculty member, Program Director and Director of School of Nursing to discuss the student behavior and retention and/or progression in the program. The conference will be documented in the student's file.

*g. 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 may take place upon acceptance to the Nursing major, 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).

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 potential positive screening by your clinical/practicum partners. 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 truly positive screening students will have 48 hours to complete a second drug screening.

#### *h. Expected Respectful and Professional Behaviors*

Students are to behave in a professional manner in class a. As a member of the SON it is vital to fulfill these expectations when interacting with patients, clinical agency personnel, faculty and staff, peers, and the general public. Examples of how students can demonstrate professional behavior and respect for others are below. Students who fail to exhibit these behaviors may be asked to leave the classroom or face other discipline within the program.

#### *Classroom:*

Students are expected to invest in their academic experience. Preparation not only allows students to succeed in didactic classes but is required for successful completion of clinical experiences. Students will be held to the highest level of the University's Academic Integrity Policy.

While attending didactic classes, students are expected to maintain professionalism. Instructors may schedule breaks as appropriate. Because of the difficult nature of these courses it is important students remain attentive for the duration of classes. Students should avoid distracting themselves or others by talking or use of electronic devices. Students are

expected to maintain the level of self-care allows them to be attentive, well rested, and contribute to the classroom or clinical experience.

Computers may be allowed by the instructor for the purpose of taking notes. Computers will be required for exams and presentations. Students should ensure their personal device meets the requirements of the University and SON. Recording lectures is also allowable with the permission of the instructor. Guests are not allowed to in the classroom or clinical experiences.

*Testing:*

Exams in the SON are provided through an online proctored program. Unless otherwise stated, exams are to be taken without the use of outside materials, peer assistance, or the internet. Students should be aware the proctoring software will track internet usage during the assessment. Additionally, this program allows faculty and staff to complete analysis of each exam for fairness and accuracy.

Any attempt to cheat, plagiarize, or distract the class during an exam this will be viewed a violation of the Academic Integrity Policy (*see section II.A.iii.a*). If a student violates this policy the instructor reserves the right to dismiss the student from the class. Students are to observe all testing policies listed in the course syllabus.

If a student has questions regarding a test item they should make an appointment with the involved faculty and submit the question in writing, with a documented source from either lecture or the assigned textbook. This should be done within 7 days of the exam.

If a student is unable to complete an exam for extenuating circumstances the instructor is to be notified prior to the absence. For the policies on missing and making up an exam see section *II.A.iii.d* of this handbook.

*Communication:*

Students are expected to make every effort to maintain professional communication with staff, faculty, and peers. Faculty and staff should be addressed with appropriate titles (“Professor” or “Dr.”) unless otherwise directed.

Conflict resolution is a necessary skill for a practitioner to develop. It is important that students address issues or concerns in a respectful and mature manner. Questions regarding specific material should be first directed to the instructor of the related course. If the concern is not resolved the student should then follow the appropriate channels (Instructor, Program Director, Director of Undergraduate Programs, then Director of SON).

As mentioned in section *II.A.iii.c*, it is the responsibility of the student to communicate with instructors regarding any schedule conflicts. This communication should be done via email when possible to allow for a record of the conversation.

### **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. The top 35% of pre-licensure students are eligible for nomination after completing at least half of their nursing courses. More information is available at [www.nursingsociety.org](http://www.nursingsociety.org).

#### **B. Committees and Engagement**

##### *i. Curriculum Committee (CC)*

The Curriculum Committee is composed of faculty and student representatives. Students serve in an advisory capacity. This committee usually meets monthly during the academic year to evaluate and further develop policies and procedures related to curriculum, to ensure conformity and current-ness with present-day trends, and to provide leadership in developing the framework and design of the curriculum.

##### *ii. Student Affairs Committee (SAC)*

The Student Affairs Committee is composed of faculty members and student representatives. Duties of this committee include annually reviewing policies and procedures concerning admission to undergraduate nursing programs and making recommendations for modifications as needed. The committee will act on appeals

from students regarding admission, retention, and promotion. The committee develops student related policies for the School of Nursing.

***iii. 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.

***iv. Travel Abroad***

The Office of International Studies is the University's source of information for sponsored study abroad opportunities. Presently there are no study abroad opportunities offered to fulfill the upper level nursing requirements. Students interested in pursuing a study abroad experience should contact the Office of International Studies.

The SON coordinates service abroad opportunities for students each year. Students interested in a service abroad experience should speak with their faculty advisor. Announcements regarding these experiences will be made through the Blackboard Homeplace.

**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 (FASFA) 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 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.

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. If a student has questions regarding how or where a course applies to their degree audit, they should speak with their faculty advisor.

***iii. Applying for Graduation***

All students must submit a graduation application 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. 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. Information about this event will be provided by the Office of Student Services.

#### **F. Awards for Graduating Seniors**

The SON recognizes outstanding graduates through a variety of awards presented at the SON Convocation and at the College of Health and Human Sciences awards ceremony. Nursing faculty nominate eligible graduates. Information may be solicited from the nominees to facilitate faculty voting on the recipients. Other awards may be initiated or added to by alumni and friends of the SON.

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

This award honoring Dr. Vivian Deitz, Head of the SON from 1988 through 1996, is presented to a pre-licensure, RN to BSN, and MSN graduate or alumna who demonstrated outstanding qualities as a student.

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

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

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

In the event of an exposure to eyes, mouth, mucus membrane, non-intact skin or parenteral contact, the area contacted should be washed with soap and water immediately. A medical evaluation should be performed immediately and the clinical faculty, WCU Safety Officer, and the SON Director notified as soon as feasible by the faculty member for either student or faculty member exposure. The student and faculty member should adhere to the following guidelines.

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

### **Purpose:**

The School of Nursing supports the use of social media for the purpose of engaging in professional and personal communication between the University, other students, prospective students, faculty, and staff. These WCU School of Nursing guidelines apply to anyone who engages in internet conversations for school-related purposes or school-related activities such as interactions in or about clinical and didactic course activities.

Dissemination of sensitive and confidential information, which is protected under Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) of 1996, whether discussed through traditional communication channels or through social media is prohibited outside the appropriate setting. Our goal is to ensure that all participation online is respectful and upholds the mission, vision, and values of Western Carolina University and the School of Nursing and adheres to the standards of professionalism within nursing.

### **Definitions:**

Social media is defined as mechanisms for communication 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 C**

**Academic Warning Form  
Western Carolina University  
Post Licensure Nursing Program**

**Academic Warning**

Student:

Course:

Term:

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

Didactic:      Grade:

Clinical:      Grade:

Assignment	Due Date	Status

**Recommendations by faculty for improvement:**

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

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

Copy of completed form provided to:

1. Student Navigate profile (through *Report on Appointment*)
2. Program Director
3. Student Services

**Appendix D**  
**COLLEGE OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SCIENCES & SCHOOL OF NURSING**  
**UNDERGRADUATE POST-LICENSURE NURSING STUDENT HANDBOOK**  
**AGREEMENT AND CONSENT FORM**

**College of Health and Human Sciences Acknowledgement and Consent:** I have read and understand the College of Health and Human Sciences Alcohol and Illegal Drug Testing Policy for Students. 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. *Post-licensure students should note that screenings are not regularly required in their programs.*

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

<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/registrars-office/transcripts/ferpa.aspx](http://www.wcu.edu/learn/academic-services/registrars-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.