

# NORTHWEST FLORIDA STATE COLLEGE

## RN TO BSN Student Handbook

The baccalaureate nursing program at Northwest Florida State College is accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education, One Dupont Circle, NW, Suite 530, Washington DC 20036, (202) 887-6791. For more information regarding disclosure, please review pages 15-16 of the [CCNE Procedures for Accreditation of Baccalaureate and Graduate Degree Nursing Programs](#).

NORTHWEST FLORIDA STATE COLLEGE

# **Registered Nurse to Bachelor of Science in Nursing**

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# Preface

This Student Handbook has been prepared for use by students enrolled in the Northwest Florida State College (NWFSC) RN to BSN Program.

All students should also have a copy of the current *Northwest Florida State College Catalog and Student Handbook* for general information.

The NWFSC RN to BSN Program reserves the right to change, without notice, any statement in this handbook concerning, but not limited to, rules, policies, fees, curricula, and courses. Such changes shall be effective whenever determined by the appropriate faculty and administrative bodies; they may govern both old and new students. Official notification of changes will be available in the appropriate department offices and, when feasible, provided via college email to current RN to BSN students and posted to the NWFSC websites under RN to BSN program information. It is the student's obligation to know and adhere to all applicable program, NWFSC rules and regulations.

Nothing in this handbook constitutes, is intended to constitute, or should be construed as creating a contract between a student and NWFSC.

NWFSC an EA/EO institutions and does not discriminate on the basis of sex, race, age, national origin, sexual orientation, religion, disability, or veteran status. NWFSC subscribes fully to all federal and state legislation and regulations regarding discrimination.

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## **P U B L I C A T I O N**

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Written: July 24, 2008

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Last Revision:

October 2013

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## **Structure**

**The NWFSC RN to BSN program** allows students who have completed an associate degree in nursing or nursing diploma and who hold a valid Florida Registered Nursing license (RN) to continue their studies in a baccalaureate program offered through Northwest Florida State College.



# Northwest Florida State College

## Mission Statement

Northwest Florida State College improves lives. We deliver outstanding educational programs that are relevant, accessible, and engaging for students of all ages and provide exceptional cultural, athletic, and economic development activities for the communities served. We commit to excellence, creativity, integrity, and service.

## RN to BSN Program Mission

The mission of the NWFSC Program is to offer dynamic, comprehensive and innovative educational experiences that will enable students to achieve their nursing knowledge and enhance their professional skills to meet the future health care needs of the community.



### Program Goals

The goals of this program are to:

- provide students with an expanded knowledge base & broader skill sets to meet future career demands.
- advance the use of the nursing process to promote health, prevent disease and participate in enhancing the holistic health and well-being of diverse individuals, groups and communities.
- further student scholarship in evaluating evidence-based research to determine its efficacy and applicability to nursing practice.
- expand students' use of critical thinking skills to assess, analyze and evaluate teaching/learning strategies and decision-making processes.
- use critical thinking to influence health care decisions of clients, groups, families and communities within a societal context.
- provide a foundation of continued accountability for practice that is based on sound ethical-legal principles and contemporary standards of professional nursing.
- promote the resolution of complex health care problems by employing the roles of manager, advocate, leader and member of the nursing profession in working with clients, groups, families, communities and health care team members.
- encourage students to continue lifelong learning to enhance personal and professional development.



### Expected Student Learning Outcomes

In addition to expected program outcomes, the college established specific expected student learning outcomes designed to validate each BSN graduate's attainment of program goals.

1. Demonstrate accountability, responsibility, authority, ethical practice, and professionalism as defined by the American Nurses Association Code of Ethics.
2. Apply the combined knowledge derived from the natural sciences, behavioral sciences, the humanities, and nursing theory to the promotion of health, reduction of health risks and prevention of disease through expanded use of the nursing process.
3. Facilitate patient, family, & community preferences, values, and needs in the coordination and integration of care.
4. Demonstrate a commitment to lifelong learning to promote personal and professional development.
5. Employ current theories and principles of leadership and management in the improvement of quality nursing care.
6. Describe and use appropriate teaching and learning theories to design, implement, and evaluate educational experiences for a diverse population of clients.
7. Use higher order critical thinking skills (e.g. assessment, analysis, synthesis) effectively by integrating best current evidence and clinical expertise to determine their relevance and application to the delivery of optimal nursing care.
8. Apply appropriate theory, practice, and evidence in health promotion and in planning care for complex client situations.
9. Recognize the patient or designee as the source of control and full partner in providing compassionate, socio-cultural appropriate, ethical, spiritual and coordinated care based on respect for the patient's preferences, values, & needs.
10. Function effectively within nursing and inter-professional teams, fostering open communication, mutual respect and shared decision-making to achieve quality patient care.
11. Use information & technology to communicate, manage knowledge, mitigate error, & support decision making.

## **Expected Program Outcomes**

1. At least 80% of the RN to BSN Program students will earn the baccalaureate degree in nursing within three years of initial enrollment.
2. At least 80% of the RN to BSN Program students will earn the baccalaureate degree in nursing within three years of completing all general education, foreign language, and pre- requisite courses.
3. Within 12 months of program completion, at least 80% of the BSN graduates, who respond to the survey, will be employed in positions reflecting the role of the BSN, completed a certification that requires BSN, enrolled in further nursing education, or commissioned as a military officer.
4. Within one year of graduation, at least 80% of BSN graduates, who respond to the survey, will report satisfaction with the RN to BSN Nursing Program.
5. Within one year of graduation, at least 80% of employers hiring graduates of the RN to BSN program will report satisfaction with the performance of those graduates.
6. Within eighteen months of graduation, at least 80% of the program graduates, who respond to the survey, will demonstrate personal or professional growth through membership in a professional association, a community organization or other

activity that demonstrates a commitment to citizenship, community service or personal enrichment.

## Graduation Requirements

In addition to the program requirements which follow, students must satisfy all college graduation requirements specified in the applicable *NWFSC Catalog*, including but not limited to applying for graduation in the semester **preceding** the intended graduation date. Graduation applications are available online or through the NWFSC Student Services Department.

## RN to BSN Program Requirements & Information

- Complete 120 semester credits as specified in the program
- Meet all baccalaureate degree requirements, including completion of at least 36 general education credits and foreign language requirements
- Complete at least 30 nursing/nursing-related semester credits at the junior/senior (3000/4000) level;
- Complete at least 25% of the coursework towards the degree and 50% of the upper division program course work not to include portfolio assessment in residence at NWFSC. Normally these credits will be completed in the final term of enrollment;
- Earn a grade of C or better in each nursing course;
- Maintain compliance with the standards of acceptable conduct as outlined in the American Nurses Association Code of Ethics and the Florida Nurse Practice Act, and
- Maintain compliance with the rules and regulations, where appropriate, of NWFSC

## NWFSC RN to BSN Course Requirements

Dimensions of Baccalaureate Nursing Practice	3.0
Portfolio I	1.0
Health Assessment C	3.0
Writing for Success in Nursing	1.0
Nursing Care of Complex Clients	3.0
Evidence-Based Practice: Incorporating Nursing Research	3.0
Nursing Elective	3.0
Family and Community Health C	5.0
Nursing Leadership and Management C	5.0
Portfolio II	1.0
Health Care Issues	2.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>30.0</b>

Upon completion of the above curriculum 14.0 credit hours will be awarded through a portfolio review. Students may complete these courses through a **five, four, three semester or hybrid** track.



### **Internet Classroom Courses**

The theory portion of the nursing curriculum is delivered in a distance learning/online format. Regardless of the delivery format and the number of hours usually spent in traditional classroom/lab setting, students should expect to spend the same amount of time and the same or greater amount of effort in completing course requirements. The faculty maintains liberal office hours to encourage student interaction.

**Admission/Eligibility Requirements** Program admission requirements parallel the State of Florida AS to BS Articulation Agreement.

- Completion of an associate degree nursing program prior to official program admission.
- Documentation of Current, Clear/Active, Florida RN Licensure. Recent graduates of A.S. nursing programs or Registered Nurses who have recently moved to Florida and have not yet obtained a Florida RN License may apply and may be accepted on a provisional basis. The student must hold a current Florida RN License prior to attending clinical experiences.
- Completion of all admission forms for Northwest Florida State College by the established deadline.
- Submission of all official transcripts by the established deadline.
- Minimum cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA) of 2.75 in all college credit course work and a minimum grade of “C” in all Florida Common Course Prerequisites applicable to the AS to RN to BSN degree program. Depending on program capacity, students with less than a 2.75 may be admitted on a provisional basis. *Students with less than a 2.75 GPA may be admitted on a provisional basis. Provisional status will be removed if the student earns a GPA of 3.0 or higher for his/her first eight upper division nursing credits at NWFSC.* (Ideally, prerequisites should be completed prior to enrolling in upper division nursing courses; however, all prerequisite courses must be completed before enrolling in senior level courses.)
- Completion of the standard Florida foreign language upper division admission requirement (If, at the time of admission, the student has not completed two consecutive years of the same foreign language in high school or two in college, the student will need to complete six credits of foreign language before completing the program.)

*(Additional pre-enrollment conditions (e.g. proof of immunizations, CPR verification, drug screen, and background check must be satisfied prior to registration. A positive result in either requirement may result in the student not being admitted to the program because clinical agencies prohibit students with certain criminal offenses and positive drug screens from receiving clinical instruction in their facility.)*

### **Steps for the Admission Process**

1. Submit completed *Northwest Florida State College* Admission & Residency Forms
2. Satisfy all requirements for admission to the College as a RN to BSN degree-seeking student

3. Submit *online* the ***RN to BSN Program Application Form***
4. Satisfy all eligibility requirements for admission to the NWFSC RN to BSN Program
5. Submit official *high school* and *college transcripts* from all previously attended colleges and universities, to include official score reports from CLEP, DANTES, AP, and IB

### **Steps for Selection Process**

An RN to BSN Program director, records and reports specialist, and academic advisor review applications for eligibility.

- If the number of applicants in the pool exceeds the remaining program slots, a random selection process will be used to determine the individuals to be admitted.
- Eligible applicants not admitted will be placed on a waiting list which will expire at the close of the fall term.
- Interested individuals may apply again for future admission periods.

### **Transfer Students**

Transfer students may be required to validate course credit previously taken through written and/or lab/clinical examination. The need for such validation will be determined by the Director and nursing faculty after consideration of previous grades and length of time away from nursing courses.

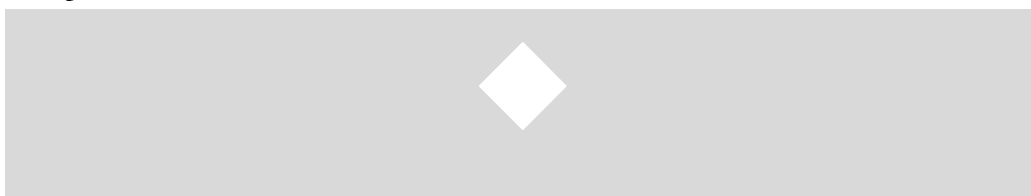


#### **Program Expense**

In addition to course tuition and fees, expenditures specific to nursing courses include specialized equipment, uniforms, materials and supply fees for clinical and laboratory courses, software subscriptions, and transportation for off-campus experiences.

### **Financial Assistance**

Financial aid, scholarships, and loans are available to nursing students from various sources. Students should contact the Office of Financial Aid at NWFSC for specific information.



## Scholarship

Students may apply for scholarships through the [Northwest Florida State College Foundation](#)

## Student Advisement

Potential students may receive unofficial academic advisement when requested. Official advisement occurs after a transcript review is completed by NWFSC and before classes begin as time allows. A degree audit is available to students through RaiderNet. Each student is assigned a faculty advisor once they are admitted to the program. The faculty advisor and the student will discuss the degree audit at the beginning of the program and a plan of study is reviewed with the student. If students need to revise their plan of study, students should contact their program academic advisor to develop an individualized plan of study. If they have questions, those should be brought to the advisor's attention for explanation and problem solving. All required courses are not taught every semester, so students are directed to withdraw from courses or make changes to their plan of study only after talking with their advisor.

## Dress Code/Uniform Guidelines

The NWFSC RN to BSN uniform is a solid color uniform dress or solid colored shirt and pants (scrubs tops and pants), white socks or hose, white shoes and Northwest Florida State College RN to BSN Identification Badge. Students must adhere to clinical facility dress codes as well. Students should always look professional.

- Pants should not bind hips or legs.
- Uniforms should be clean and pressed.
- Closed toe and plain white shoes are to be worn with white socks or hose.
- Minimal jewelry may be worn.
- If a beard or mustache is worn, it must be neatly trimmed.
- Nails must be short and rounded with no polish.
- When students are in a community setting where street clothes and laboratory coats with collars are appropriate, no jeans (of any color), sweat pants, tank tops, shorts, miniskirts, or thongs (flip flops) are allowed.
- Piercings and tattoos are to be concealed as per clinical agency policy.

## Student Progression

Students are required to perform at a minimal grade point level of 2.0 (on a 4.0 scale) on all RN to BSN course requirements. The RN to BSN nursing prerequisites are vital to the successful completion of the curriculum and should be completed as specified in the RN to BSN Plan of Study (POS). However, due to an extraordinary, compelling, and unforeseen circumstance, such courses may be taken out of sequence. If any RN to BSN student believes that the POS cannot be followed, the student must appeal to their Program advisor or Program Director **prior** to the deadline for completing the course(s).

Students are expected to maintain compliance with the standards of acceptable conduct as outlined in the American Nurses Association Code of Ethics and the Florida Nurse Practice Act, and to maintain compliance with the rules and regulations of Northwest Florida State College. Failure to comply with these standards may result in dismissal from the RN to BSN program or other appropriate action.

## Functions Essential to the RN to BSN Course of Study

Students pursuing the RN to BSN program should be able to perform those functions essential to the successful completion of the curriculum. These functions and activities are based upon the typical tasks performed by nurses.

Function	Standard	Example Activity
Communication	Ability to interact with others in English, both verbally and in legible written form. Read English.	Keep accurate records. Read and write procedures. Explain procedures and results to patients, health care providers, co-workers.
Hearing	Ability to gather information aurally or to adapt.	Recognize instrument signals, alarms. Use telephone.
Interaction	Ability to interact with individuals or groups from a range of social, cultural, emotional, and intellectual backgrounds.	Establish and maintain rapport and trust with patients, co-workers, and other health care professionals.
Mobility	Ability to move from room to room, and to maneuver in small places, e.g., around instruments, between beds, benches, etc.	Move around hallways, procedure rooms, patient room, storage areas as necessary.
Problem Solving	Ability to measure, calculate, reason and analyze; be able to synthesize and apply complete information	Identify patterns, relevancy, inconsistencies; set priorities.
Motor Skills	Demonstrate/possess gross and fine motor skills to assist patients and perform procedures.	Reach and manipulate equipment and supplies. Assist patients.
Self-Care	Ability to present a professional appearance. Maintain own health and safety on the job.	Observe safety/OSHA policies. Practice standard precautions. Promote healthy lifestyles in patients.
Olfaction	Demonstrate sufficient olfactory sense to maintain patients', environment safety.	Use odors to assess specimens, tests. Maintain a safe environment.
Temperament	Ability to work in high stress workplace environment.	Perform duties in emergency situations; with sick patients; in situations with time and manpower constraints.
Vision	Ability to accurately perform and assess patient procedures.	Distinguish colors and opacity
Computer Literacy	Ability to use computer technologies including accessing, retrieving, receiving, and communicating information.	E-mail, creating and uploading MS WORD documents, Presentation software, Internet searches, library database retrieval

The nursing program has identified the performance standards necessary for a student in the clinical or laboratory arena to be able to meet. The student enrolled in the program must demonstrate the ability to perform the components comprising each of these areas. Because providing direct patient care is physically and mentally demanding, students need to meet the physical and mental requirements of the position in the same setting in which they are completing a clinical rotation. A change or deviation from the initial healthcare screening which makes the student unable to meet the listed performance standards requires a release from a healthcare provider. This healthcare provider must be associated with the area of injury/concern\*.

\*Example: An orthopedic concern must be signed by a healthcare professional related to the care of the orthopedic injury.

## **Student Support – Tutorial & Special Needs**

Numerous learning support services are available at no cost to RN to BSN students through Northwest Florida State College. For a summary of NWFSC tutorial services, check <http://www.nwfsc.edu/Academics/AcademicSupport/> or visit the Academic Success Center in Building K on the Niceville Campus. In addition, specialized nursing-related support programs are available online in the Nursing and Allied Health Computer Lab in Building K of the Northwest Florida State College, Niceville Campus.

**Smarthinking.com®** is a 24/7 online tutorial service available to all NWFSC students. Paper proofing can be accomplished online by Masters and Doctorally prepared professors. Smarthinking.com® provides an online tutoring service for those questions that come up when studying or writing. Each student is limited to two hours of online time with Smarthinking unless permission is given for additional hours. Permission is granted through the Academic Success Center at 729.5389. Smarthinking.com is available all night and all day long for when students study!

Students with special needs for which accommodations may be appropriate to assist in pursuing the program should contact the NWFSC Office of Services for Students with Special Needs in Building K on the Niceville Campus or call 729-6079 (TDD 1-800-955-8771 or Voice 1-800-955-8770). Special needs students are encouraged to make such contact as early as possible.

## **Course Completion**

1. Students must complete all nursing courses with a final grade of 'C' or better.
2. If a student's BSN program GPA calculates to less than 2.50 GPA at the end of any term, the student will be required to come to campus for written counseling with the program director or the student's program advisor to determine the resources needed to improve his or her college work.

3. Students may repeat the same clinical course only once, and on a space-available basis.
4. Students are allowed to repeat two nursing courses before mandatory withdrawal from the BSN program.
5. All students receive midterm grades and students receiving a grade below a “C” should contact their professor immediately for an appointment.

## Readmission



Students who withdraw from or are dismissed from the RN to BSN program may apply to return to the program, however readmission is not guaranteed. Faculty advisors from Northwest Florida State College are available to assist students who wish to resume their RN to BSN studies.

A written request for readmission must be submitted to the Northwest Florida State College RN to BSN Program Director. Readmission will be determined upon consideration of the student’s record with respect to the following.

- a. Adherence to the program admission/eligibility requirements
- b. Overall academic record
- c. Cumulative GPA at time of program departure
- d. Semester GPA at the time of departure
- e. Previous pattern of student progression within the program
- f. Program enrollment (course and program capacity)
- g. Availability of clinical placement
- h. Previous clinical performance
- i. Other program-related factors

Depending on the circumstances of program departure and the length of time since the last program enrollment, students may be required to demonstrate mastery of selected clinical skills and/or content knowledge through written examination and/or clinical assessment. An interview with program advisors and/or recommendations from past RN to BSN instructors may also be required. Such assessments are used as part of the advising process and designed to help ensure the returning student is successful in completing the program. Northwest Florida State College is committed to student success and students are encouraged to complete their RN to BSN studies; faculty and staff are available to assist students with this process.

## Academic Advising

After admission to the program, the student is assigned an academic advisor. Students will meet the advisor to develop an individualized academic degree plan. In general, NUR and NSP courses at Northwest Florida State College require permission prior to registration. Students may meet with advisors and faculty members during office hours or by appointment.

## Course Grades

Northwest Florida State College faculty members adhere to the grading practices established and presented in the NWFSC catalog. Each faculty member establishes the specific grading plan and attendance requirements for his/her assigned courses. These requirements are explained to the students at the beginning of each course; the course syllabus/policies include the course evaluation criteria, as well as other instructional policies. The NWFSC BSN Program uses letter grades.

NORTHWEST FLORIDA STATE COLLEGE RN to BSN Program Grading Guidelines	
A	93 - 100
B	83 - 92
C	75 - 82
D	70 - 74
F	69 or below

Students are evaluated based upon their mastery of the objectives prescribed for each course. Grades on particular assignments are typically graded within 7-10 days or before the next like assignment is due. Assignment grades are communicated to students per syllabus instructions. If students have questions about their grades, they are encouraged to contact the course instructor as soon as possible. All course objectives (for NUR and NSP courses and pre-requisites) must be completed successfully with grade of 'C' (minimum 75 percent) or better in order to progress in the nursing program. Instructors file final course grades with the registrar at the end of each semester.

### Incomplete Grades

An *incomplete* (I grade) is used only in cases of true hardship when unanticipated extenuating circumstances have resulted in the student's being unable to complete course requirements by the end of the semester. In all cases, however, the student must be making progress in the course before being eligible for a grade of *Incomplete* (I). An *incomplete* is the prerogative of the instructor, not the student. An *I* may be granted at the discretion of the faculty in consultation with the department director. In the rare instances, in which this occurs, the following policies will apply:

1. All college policies regarding an incomplete are applicable to nursing courses. (Refer to the Northwest Florida State College catalog.)
2. An incomplete will not be used to accomplish remediation; the student must be passing the course at the time the incomplete is awarded.
3. Students will receive a date by which the incomplete must be removed.

### Successful Students Login Often

Faculty highly recommends that students login to their course(s) and read updates at least every 48-72 hours. Doing so allows students to view important course material and make progress toward course completion. Students who do not login for seven days and turn in one assignment late are required to meet personally with the instructor or program director for written counseling to problem solve and help the student to master the course content. The written counseling form will be filed with a student's program advisor. Should the same problem continue after the written counseling, students may earn a failing grade in the course.

### **Credit by Proficiency Exam**

Proficiency or challenge exams are available in selected courses at Northwest Florida State College; however permission must be obtained in advance. Proficiency/challenge exams are not available for lab courses or for certain general education and prerequisite courses. Students should contact the department director to make arrangements. A student who has previously attempted a course or is currently enrolled in a course may not use the credit by examination option for that course.

To challenge a Northwest Florida State College course, the student must meet similar eligibility criteria published in the *Northwest Florida State College Catalog and Student Handbook* under *Credit by Alternative Means of Study*. Students interested in receiving credit through a proficiency/challenge exam should contact the Northwest Florida State College Office of Enrollment Services.

### **Interruptions to Program Progress (Program Deceleration)**

#### **A. Student-Initiated Withdrawal from a Course**

Students may withdraw from a course within the withdrawal period listed in the academic calendar for each semester. Students should check institutional materials carefully, as adherence to deadlines is the student's responsibility. Students who choose to withdraw from a nursing course (NUR or NSP prefix) may be allowed to re-enroll in that course in a future term, however, eligibility for re-enrollment is subject to course/clinical space availability and to the student's program enrollment status (i.e. the student has not been dismissed or withdrawn from the program or is otherwise ineligible to re-enroll at the college). A student who withdraws from a course must meet with an advisor to update his/her program plan to reflect the changed pattern of progression. In most instances, students should expect to prolong program progress when they elect to withdraw from a course. The student should work with a faculty member or advisor to explore all other alternatives before taking such action.

Students must follow appropriate Northwest Florida State College procedures when withdrawing from a course. Students who do not follow



the required Northwest Florida State College withdrawal procedures will be awarded the grade they earned.

Student-initiated withdrawal from all NUR and NSP courses in a given term is tantamount to a student-initiated withdrawal from the program. A student considering withdrawal should meet with his/her advisor prior to taking such action. See the following section of the handbook.

### **B. Student-Initiated Withdrawal from the Program and/or Request for Modified Program Plan**

Students experiencing personal or academic difficulties may request a modification of their scheduled program of study/degree plan or may withdraw from the program. Some modification in course sequencing may be possible without an official withdrawal from the program. In such cases, the student must contact his/her academic advisor as soon as possible to discuss the situation.

If the situation indicates a full withdrawal from courses and the program is warranted, the student will be subject to the re-admission process. Readmission to the program after withdrawal or dismissal is not guaranteed. A student who wishes to return to the program must request to be re-admitted. See the *Readmission* section of this handbook.

Students withdrawing from the RN to BSN program will be requested to complete an *Exit Interview* as part of the withdrawal process.

### **C. Dismissal or Administrative Withdrawal from the Program**

Students are expected to maintain the highest standards of professional and academic integrity at all times. Students are subject to dismissal from the RN to BSN program for committing one or more of the following infractions.

- a. Cumulative, Program, or Term-by-Term GPA that drops below 2.0 on a 4.0 scale
- b. Loss of Current, Clear/Active, Florida RN Licensure
- c. Falsification of records or reports
- d. Cheating on an examination, quiz, or any other assignment
- e. Plagiarism, which is the presentation of another's work as if it were the student's own
- f. Violation of client and/or agency confidential information
- g. Violation of the Northwest Florida State College student conduct policies
- h. Violation of clinical site policies or procedures, including confidentiality and HIPAA

- i. Violation of the American Nurses Association Code of Ethics
- j. Violation of the Florida Nurse Practice Act
- k. Loss of a current clear/active Florida Registered Nursing License
- l. Testing positive for illicit drugs
- m. See the Northwest Florida State College catalog *Student Rights and Responsibilities* for additional reasons for dismissal
- n. Repeated failure to logon to course(s) in a timely manner (p. 11)

In addition, a student whose personal integrity, health or other behaviors demonstrate unfitness to continue the nursing program may be dismissed from the program or withdrawn from a given course; students considered by faculty member(s) to be unsafe practitioners will be dismissed from the program. (See the “Health and Safety” section of this handbook.)

Students who fail to make satisfactory academic and course progress may be dismissed or administratively withdrawn from the program.

A counseling form will be issued to the student and/or a faculty conference will be scheduled when any behavior is observed that places the student at risk for failure and/or dismissal from the RN to BSN program. If a second counseling form, or conference is necessary, the student's progression in the program may be reviewed by the program director and nursing faculty and further progression in the program will be contingent upon the approval of by the program director and nursing faculty.

General college policies and procedures are published in the [\*Northwest Florida State College Catalog and Student Handbook\*](#).

College policies, as well as program policies and procedures, extend to all sites where students are engaged in the role of nursing student.

### **Student Rights – Appeals and Grievances**

All students have the right to seek knowledge, exchange and debate ideas, form opinions, and express their views. However, it is understood that this knowledge and exercise of rights must be balanced with a concomitant knowledge of and adherence to student responsibilities.

Should a student disagree with the grade that was computed by a faculty member regarding an assignment, the student should contact the faculty member to discuss the assignment, grading criteria, grading process, and the student’s grade. If the discussion does not result in the student’s understanding of the grade and/or the grading process, the student may contact the Program Director to discuss the assignment and grade in question.

The student can also wait until the end of the semester to discuss the grade with the faculty member or Program Director.

Should any concern outside of grading need to be discussed with the Program Director, students should know that an open door policy exists to discuss any classroom issue regarding a course.

If the issue or concern is not resolved at the department level, the student may pursue the informal and, if needed, formal appeal/grievance procedures established by the college. Appeal and grievance procedures for various concerns, including but not limited to course grades, harassment and discrimination are detailed in the “Student Rights and Responsibilities” section of the *College Catalog and Student Handbook*. These rights and responsibilities apply to nursing students in the same manner they do to other students.

### **Student Evaluation of Specific Courses and the Program**

Students are encouraged to contribute to the Suggestion Box that is found in each online course when they think of ideas for program or course improvements. Also, students are requested to complete the student evaluation of instruction offered at the course level each semester, and to participate in the end of program evaluation, the college graduation survey, the one-year post-graduation survey, and the various informal evaluation opportunities throughout the program.

### **Class Courtesy**

Professional behavior is an expectation of all present in the traditional classroom or clinical as well as in the online classroom. This includes respect for both faculty members and students while presenting content or communicating an opinion. Students are expected to be prepared to participate in class discussion and online discussions. Students who demonstrate unprofessional behavior online or in a class or clinical will be asked to leave the online or traditional classroom.

Cell phones, beepers and other wireless communication devices should be silent during all class, lab and clinical sessions. Students should notify the course instructor if they have an emergency and need to request an exception to this policy.

Children are not permitted in labs, at clinical sites or other facilities where hazardous conditions may exist. As a courtesy to faculty members, staff and other students, children are not permitted to accompany students to class. Childcare is the responsibility of the parent(s)/student.

### **Clinical Attendance**

Clinical experiences are planned to enhance the learning process. Being present, prepared, and on time demonstrates a seriousness of purpose and enriches the learning experience for both faculty and students. The college attendance policies apply to students in the RN to BSN Program; however individual faculty members may set more specific attendance requirements

Prompt attendance and preparation for clinical experiences are required. The faculty will maintain attendance records. The faculty member may dismiss a student from a clinical session for tardiness, dress code violations, insufficient preparation, physical or mental impairment, safety violations, or other unprofessional conduct. The student may be allowed to make-up the experience, provided comparable experiences which meet the course objectives are available and the student is eligible to continue in the course and the program.

Absences and tardiness jeopardize a student's ability to achieve the objectives of the course and are inconsistent with professional behavior. If problems are noted with attendance or tardiness, the student will be counseled and issued a letter of warning. A copy of the letter will be placed in the student's academic file in the program office. If attendance or tardiness problems continue, the student will be issued a deficiency letter. Any further incidences may result in withdrawal or dismissal from the nursing program.

### **Emergency Absence from Clinical**

In the event that the student must be absent from clinical, it is the student's responsibility to call the clinical faculty a minimum of one hour prior to the start of clinical. The student must provide the following information:

1. Student's name
2. Reason for student's absence.
3. Activity (learning lab, clinical experience, etc.) from which the student will be absent.
4. Name of instructor who should be notified of the absence.
5. Hospital/agency and clinical unit to which the student is assigned (if assigned to clinical that day).

### **Clinical Preparation**

Students are expected to prepare for clinical assignments prior to the scheduled experience. A student unprepared for a clinical assignment will be dismissed from the clinical experience. A student dismissed from clinical for being unprepared will be issued a deficiency letter. The student may be allowed to make-up the experience, provided comparable experiences which meet the course objectives are available and the student is eligible to continue in the course and the program.

### **Written Assignments**

All written assignments in nursing courses must demonstrate a professional level of scholarship by adhering to the current American Psychological Association (APA) format. Certain non-nursing courses at Northwest Florida State College may require the student to use the standards of the Modern Language Association (MLA).

Guidelines for writing in APA style may be found in the publication and in this handbook. Assistance with APA style writing can also be found by Northwest Florida State College students at [Smarthinking.com](http://Smarthinking.com)® and the Northwest Florida State College Academic Success Center.

Credit for late or otherwise deficient papers/written assignments will be reduced/adjusted according to the policies of the individual instructor. Students should not expect late papers to receive full credit, nor should student expect opportunities for extra credit. Papers/written assignments may be retained in the program office.

### **Liability Insurance**

Nursing is a profession in which its members are accountable. Liability insurance coverage beyond that provided by the Northwest Florida State College for the clinical experience is the responsibility of each student.

### **Computer Access**

All students must have access to a computer, a printer and ready access to a scanner. The student needs to be proficient in word processing, e-mail, file transfer and literary searches. Registration can be done by computer, several of the nursing courses are on-line and departmental communications are often sent via e-mail. While most students prefer the convenience of doing their course work on their own personal computer, computer access is available in other ways for students who do not own a computer. Open computer labs are available to students at the Northwest Florida State College Fort Walton Beach Campus and on the Northwest Florida State College Niceville Campus in the Learning Resource Center (LRC), Building R and Building K. LRC computers are available to students during the following times: fall and spring terms Monday through Thursday from 7:30 am-9:30 pm, Fridays 7:30 am-4:30 pm, and Saturdays from 9:00 am-1:00 pm. Hours vary during the summer terms. For students who wish to use a home computer most computers built within the past 2-3 years will meet your online learning needs.

### **E-Mail**

E-mail is an essential communication tool between faculty and students and is often a key factor in successful completion of course work. Typically students should expect faculty to respond to their email within 48-72 hours during normal working hours.

## **Departmental Committees and Activities**

The Northwest Florida State College Department of Nursing provides for student representation on departmental committees. Through student representation, a mechanism exists for sharing views and concerns regarding nursing education and departmental policies.

## **Gift Policy**

No gifts are to be accepted from clients. No gifts are to be given to faculty.

## **Records**

Upon admission to the nursing program, the student's RN to BSN program files are kept in a central program office. Files containing student records are under supervision or locked at all times. Only faculty and other appropriate institutional officials have access to these records. General college records are maintained in the Northwest Florida State College Office of Enrollment Services. Northwest Florida State College adheres to state and federal policies regarding the confidentiality of student records.

## **Name/Address Change**

Changes in local and/or permanent addresses, telephone number, and change in name must be reported as soon as possible to the Northwest Florida State College Registrar and the Northwest Florida State College Department of Nursing. Currently enrolled students may make changes online through [Northwest Florida State College's RaiderNET](#). Hard copy change forms are also available through the Registrar at each institution.

## **Electronic Academic Records**

[Northwest Florida State College's RaiderNET](#) gives students access to similar information in their Northwest Florida State College records. Students may also access records and unofficial transcripts through [www.facts.org](http://www.facts.org)

# **Health and Safety**

## **Health Requirements**

All students are required to comply with guidelines regarding tuberculin test or chest x-ray, Hepatitis B vaccination, Measles, Mumps, Rubella, and Tetanus before enrolling in clinical courses. Students are expected to be physically and mentally able to perform the essential functions of the nursing curriculum, and they may be requested to provide appropriate documentation. (See *Essential Functions* section of this handbook. Students must adhere to the following immunization schedule.

### **Tuberculin Skin Test (Mantoux)**

The Mantoux must have been administered within the last 12 months annually while in the nursing program.

If the test is positive, a chest x-ray and report of physician's recommendations must be attached. If student is known to have a positive reaction, the student must submit a report of the chest x-ray. After initial chest x-ray, ANNUAL evaluation/screening for tuberculosis signs/systems must be submitted.

### **Measles (Rubeola)**

2 doses of live virus measles vaccine received on or after first birthday or laboratory evidence of immunity are required for all students born on or after January 1, 1957. At least one dose of live virus measles vaccine is recommended for students born prior to 1957.

### **Mumps**

One dose of live virus vaccine on or after first birthday is required.

### **Rubella**

One dose of live virus vaccine on or after first birthday is required. Must have a record of immunization since 1980. If immunized prior to 1980, must have laboratory evidence (Rubella screen or Rubella titer) of immunity. (It is usually less expensive to have the MMR repeated than to pay for a Rubella screen or titer.) *Students of child-bearing age or who may already be pregnant should consult with a doctor regarding the options associated with this immunization.*

### **Hepatitis B**

Hepatitis B immunization is required for all nursing students who have not discussed Hepatitis B vaccination with their health care provider and completed a declination form. The series consists of three intramuscular doses of vaccine, with the second and third doses given 1 to 6 months, respectively, after the first dose. It is required that students are tested for serologic response to the vaccine 1 to 6 months following the completion of the series. A copy of the results of this testing must be submitted to the Department of Nursing. Failure to seroconvert will require a booster dose of vaccine.

### **Personal Assumption of Responsibility for Disease &/or Injury**

Northwest Florida State College RN to BSN students must comply with OSHA standards for hazardous materials control, infection control and exposure to harmful substances, including, but not limited to, blood or other body fluids.

1. Sudden Illness or Exposure to Communicable Disease. You are responsible for your own health care. Should you contract a communicable disease or be exposed to same via body fluids or other means, you must report such exposure of condition to your clinical instructor or preceptor **immediately**. Should immediate assessment & treatment be deemed necessary (including emergency care), you must comply with all agency and college policies regarding the occurrence, which includes payment for any treatment or other required exposure procedures. Further, you must complete all documents regarding the occurrence via agency/site incident as well as appropriate college incident reporting.
2. Accident. Should you become injured in a clinical facility, you must assume the costs and responsibility for diagnosis, treatments (including emergency care), and/or appropriate interventions as a result of the accident. Further, you must complete all documents regarding the occurrence via agency/site incident as well as appropriate college incident reporting.
3. Chronic Illness. You are responsible for informing your instructor (s) of any health condition, which increase your potential risk, i.e., pregnancy, allergies and/or immune disease. You must also report any health condition (including prescription medications or other treatment), which may potentially harm a client (for example, a febrile illness or infectious skin lesion) or otherwise render you unfit for duty.

**Note: If your health status (physical or mental) is, in the opinion of the faculty, impaired in the delivery of care, you may be required to submit proof of medical assessment by appropriate physician and/or agency and/or interventions to the program director. Should you be unable to meet the program standards, you may be dismissed from the program. You may appeal the dismissal by contacting the Northwest Florida State College RN to BSN Program Director.**

### **Substance Use &/Or Abuse**

Substance abuse is inconsistent with the ethics of nursing, the Nursing program and the College.

Substance use/abuse adversely affects cognitive, sensory, affective and psychomotor behaviors which can be life threatening to self and others.

You may be asked by the Nursing Program Director of Northwest Florida State College or the affiliating clinical agency to submit to individual, group and/or random drug screening at any time. The college reserves the right to determine the agency to conduct the drug screening.

You will be asked to submit to drug screening as a component of the admission or readmission procedure.

Random drug screening costs will be paid by the student. You are responsible for drug screening costs for individual screening, initial admission, or readmission.



Refusal to comply with requested screening within the time frame directed will result in dismissal from the nursing program.

## **Health Services**

See the college catalog for information for:

Available first aid and emergency services.

AIDS information and counseling will be provided by a counselor in the Student Services areas on the Niceville and Fort Walton Beach campuses. Contact with the AIDS counselor is confidential.

Alcohol and drug abuse information is available from a counselor located in Student Services on the Niceville and Fort Walton Beach campuses. Call a counselor at 729-5372. The counselor maintains information on local treatment programs and their locations.

***“Students are warned that the use, manufacture, distribution, sale, or possession of alcoholic beverages or illicit drugs on campus or at any college-sponsored event or activity is prohibited by college policy, except as provided in Florida Statute 561.01 (17). Violation of this policy will subject a student to disciplinary action. The college will refer for prosecution any violation of local, state, or federal law.***

## **Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) Certification**

Students are required to have CPR certification (American Heart Association BLS for Healthcare Providers or American Red Cross CPR for Professional Rescuers) prior to clinical experiences in all nursing courses and to maintain certification while enrolled in the RN to BSN program. A copy of current CPR certification must be presented at the beginning of each clinical course. The CPR card must be valid through the entire semester in which the student is enrolled.

## **Documentation of Health and Safety Requirements**

Documentation of current CPR competency and TB screening, recent tetanus immunization cannot expire before the end of the semester. It is the student's responsibility to see that his/her current record of immunization and CPR competency is on file with Northwest Florida State College. A student whose documentation is not current at the time of registration will not be registered for the clinical course.

The student may be allowed to enroll in the course upon provision of appropriate documentation, provided that documentation is received in a timely manner. After

the documents are received, and re-instatement is approved, the student may register for the course.

Students who have been dropped or administratively withdrawn from the course will not be able to attend class until re-instatement is complete.

### **Travel Safety**

Traveling to and from clinical sites requires the students' awareness of surroundings and activities. The *Northwest Florida State College Catalog* offers numerous safety tips and skills information.

## **Clinical Learning Policies**

### **Confidentiality**

Students will have access to confidential medical/personal client and family information, and to sensitive agency information as part of the clinical learning experience. It is of **utmost importance** that client/agency confidentiality is observed. Information concerning a client/family or agency is not to be discussed after leaving the clinical unit, or classroom setting. Violation of this policy may result in dismissal from the nursing program.

### **HIPAA Statement**

All those in healthcare must now comply with the federal regulations of The Administration Simplification Subtitle of the Health Insurance Portability & Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA). This Act requires that individually identifiable patient information be disclosed on a need to know basis only. Care must be taken to minimize incidental disclosures and must disclose only minimal amounts of information necessary to accomplish the task. The minimum disclosure standard, however, does not apply to requests for information by a healthcare provider for treatment purposes. For example, if one must administer a medication, you will have full access to the medical record. This is covered by the patient's consent for treatment.

In order to protect patient/client privacy, all personally identifying information must be removed from student papers, such as case studies. Information to be removed includes the individual's name, initials, address, phone number, fax number and social security number. Student papers may not be copied for careless circulation and handling. These written documents containing private health information must be either carefully stored or shredded to prevent the circulation of confidential patient information. Confidentiality and privacy also extends to oral communications which extend beyond the need to know for treatment and/or educational purposes.

Clinical agencies are also mandated to follow HIPAA regulations. Students will therefore be required to meet any and all of the clinical agency's requirements as a part of the clinical affiliation.

HIPAA is a Federal law. Penalties for wrongful disclosure range from fine and/or imprisonment.

### **Clinical Laboratory Experiences**

The clinical laboratory days and sections are assigned by faculty as part of the nursing courses where students have the opportunity to observe and apply knowledge of nursing. With the guidance and supervision of an instructor, students provide nursing care for selected clients. Student appearance and conduct must be appropriate to comply with the high standards of the profession. The following applies to the student in the clinical setting.

- The client's name or initials CANNOT be placed on information removed from their record for care plans, written assignments or any other purpose.
- Periodic conferences will be held to evaluate the student's clinical performance during the course. Student comments are encouraged. The student and teacher will share responsibility for evaluation of the student's progress during the course.
- Students are required to abide by the policies and procedures of the agency in which their clinical experience is scheduled.

### **Transportation**

Students shall provide their own transportation to any agency or institution included in curriculum requirements.

### **Errors and Incidents in Clinical Laboratory**

All adverse or critical incidents occurring in the clinical/laboratory setting must be reported for the purpose of generating and maintaining a record. This information is considered confidential and is retained only for the period of time a student is enrolled in the nursing program. A student responsible for or a witness to, an incident shall complete an agency and/or college incident report as appropriate. Students involved in a critical incident as defined below, may be temporarily dismissed from the clinical/lab site, withdrawn from the clinical/lab course and/or dismissed from the program at the discretion of the instructor and program administrators.

*Critical Incident: A critical incident is defined by the clinical instructor (based on the expertise and knowledge of the instructor) and supported by established standards of nursing practice as*

*any incident in which the health or well-being of a client or the threat of same is threatened or jeopardized due to the action of the student. If the clinical instructor prevents an error, the student is still at fault.*

*Examples of “Critical Incident” behaviors include, but are not limited to, the following:*

- *Functioning outside the scope of practice allowed in the “professional nursing student role” as published by the Florida Board of Nursing Rules & Regulations.*
- *Omitting safe, essential care to clients, e.g., failure to monitor vital signs, safety needs; and monitoring of vital functions and wound assessments; communication and documentation of changes in patients’ conditions;*
- *Failure to observe nursing ethics and legalities, e.g., performing in the clinical laboratory area while chemically impaired or ill with a communicable disease; breach of confidentiality; falsifying information, etc.*
- *Committing acts that harm or threaten clients, e.g., administering medications and treatments incorrectly, inappropriate communication, etc.*
- *Abandoning clients, e.g., leaving the clinical area for any reason without reporting the clients’ condition to assigned RN preceptor and/or instructor, leaving patients unattended during potentially unsafe situations, etc.*

*Procedures associated with the review of critical incidents, withdrawal or dismissal of the student, reinstatement of the student and return to class are provided to the student in writing as part of the clinical assignment and orientation process.*

### **Student as Legal Witness**

A student may not witness a will or sign legal documents.

### **Review of Client Medical Records**

Written permission must be obtained in advance from the appropriate faculty member to review a client's chart that is in the Medical Records Department. Records cannot be removed from the Medical Records Department and information must be considered confidential and for educational purposes only.

Charts may not be removed from clinical units nor can they be duplicated for any reason. No chart may be reviewed for personal reasons.

## **Student Awards**

### **Academic Excellence Award**

A student from each graduating class (May and August) is awarded the Excellence Achievement Award for the highest cumulative Grade Point Average. The award is usually made at the Pinning Celebration.

### **Academic Achievement Award**

Any number of students may receive an award for earning a 4.0 Grade Point Average for their *upper division nursing courses*. The awards are usually made at the Pinning Celebration.

### **The Lamp of Nursing Leadership Award**

The purpose of this award is to recognize a graduating senior student whose nursing practice has positively influenced people, processes, or programs. The recipient should be a senior student and an experienced leader whose nursing practice reflects care, commitment and creativity to promote the nursing profession or healthcare. The student recognized should be in the top 35% of his or her class in the NWFSC RN to BSN Program.

All members of the senior class of the NWFSC RN to BSN Program

Any student or faculty in the NWFSC RN to BSN Program may nominate. Self-nominations are invited.

The nominee will be judged for the following:

- Demonstrates a spirit of compassion and caring
- Utilizes exemplary interpersonal skills
- Builds transformational and positive change as a result of the nominee's influence on people, organizations, processes, or situations
- Makes connections with others in their community

A complete nomination consists of completion of the application and submission before April 1 (spring graduates) or July 1 (summer graduates).

This will be accomplished through a qualified judging panel of faculty.

For further information, contact Dr. Marty Walker, DNP, at 850-729-6400.

## Appendix A

### **Philosophy of the Northwest Florida State College**

#### **RN to Bachelor of Science in Nursing Program**

Nursing is a creative, caring, scientific and scholarly profession. Nursing focuses on utilizing a broad range of skills and knowledge to assist diverse individuals, families, and groups within a community to achieve optimal health. Health is defined as a client's ability to reach optimal functioning within a psychological, biological, physical, spiritual, and social environment. Healthy clients live life to the fullest and have the ability to maintain quality of life through self-care.

Using a holistic as well of scientific base, nurses provide client care in and across all environments. As a provider of care nurses utilize compassion, critical thinking, effective communication, and appropriately assess, plan, implement, and evaluate care. As accountable members of health care teams, nurses design, manage, and coordinate care. When formulating health care decisions, nurses incorporate associated ethics and patient advocacy that lead to an overall improvement in client outcomes, the underpinning of which is evidence-based practice. As responsible members of the profession BSN graduates work to endorse agendas that support high quality and cost effective health care, and the advancement of the profession.

RN to BSN nursing education prepares nurses with additional competencies regarding professional nursing leadership, management of complex systems, utilization of biotechnology and informatics as well as values affirmation. BSN graduates practice as clinical generalists who are committed to life-long learning, personal evaluation and influencing organizational change. While the responsibility of nursing faculty is to create an atmosphere that facilitates learning, the final responsibility for learning rests with the student.