



RN TO BSN STUDENT HANDBOOK

2021-2022





**NORTHWEST FLORIDA
STATE COLLEGE**

Registered Nurse to Bachelor of Science in Nursing

Student Handbook 2021-2022

Northwest Florida State College
Registered Nurse to Bachelor of
Science in Nursing 100 College
Boulevard
Niceville, Florida 32578
Phone 850.729.6400 • Fax 850.729.6484

Written: 8-2008, revised 9-2008, 7-2009, 1-2010, 7-2011, 7-2012, 1-2013, 5-2013, 8-2013, 10-
2013, 5-2014,
6-2014, 12-2015, 10-2016, 7-2018, 5-2019, 6-2020, 8-2021

Table of Contents

<u>Preface</u>	1
<u>Notice of Equal Access/Equal Opportunity and Nondiscrimination</u>	2
<u>RN to BSN Program Philosophy</u>	3
<u>Program Goals</u>	4
<u>Expected Student Outcomes</u>	5
<u>RN to BSN Graduation Requirements</u>	5
<u>Program Requirements</u>	5
<u>Required RN to BSN Courses</u>	6
<u>NWF Online</u>	5
<u>Admission/Eligibility Requirements</u>	6
<u>Steps for the Admission Process</u>	7
<u>Selection Process</u>	7
<u>Transfer Students</u>	7
<u>Program Expense</u>	7
<u>Financial Assistance</u>	8
<u>Scholarships</u>	8
<u>Academic Advising</u>	8
<u>Student Progression</u>	8
<u>Dress Code</u>	8
<u>Functions Essential to the RN to BSN Course of Study</u>	9
<u>Student Support Academic and Special Needs</u>	9
<u>Course Completion</u>	9
<u>Readmission</u>	9
<u>Course Grades</u>	10
<u>Credit by Proficiency Exam</u>	11
<u>Interruptions to Program Progress</u>	11
<u>Student Initiated Withdrawal from the Program</u>	12
<u>Dismissal from the Program</u>	12
<u>Student Rights- Appeals and Grievances</u>	13
<u>Class Courtesy</u>	14
<u>Clinical Experiential Learning Attendance</u>	14

<u>Written Assignments</u>	15
<u>Liability Insurance</u>	15
<u>Computer Access</u>	15
<u>Email</u>	15
<u>Departmental Committees and Activities</u>	16
<u>Gift Policy</u>	16
<u>Departmental Student Records</u>	16
<u>Name/Address Changes</u>	16
<u>Electronic Academic Records</u>	16
<u>Health and Safety</u>	16
<u>Health Requirements</u>	16
<u>Personal Assumption of Responsibility for Disease &/or Injury</u>	18
<u>Substance use &/or Abuse</u>	18
<u>Health Services</u>	18
<u>Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) Certification</u>	18
<u>Clinical Experiential Learning Policies</u>	19
<u>Confidentiality</u>	19
<u>HIPAA Statement</u>	19
<u>Transportation</u>	19
<u>Errors and Incidents in Clinical Laboratory Experiences</u>	19
<u>Student as Legal Witness</u>	20
<u>Review of Client Medical Records</u>	20
<u>Handbook Acknowledgement Form</u>	21

WELCOME LETTER

To the Incoming RN to BSN Nursing Student:

Congratulations and welcome! We are so happy to have you join us as a student in the RN to BSN Nursing Program at Northwest Florida State College. Our primary goal is to support you in attaining your Bachelor of Science in Nursing Degree and to prepare you for career advancement and the pursuit of an advanced nursing degree.

This Handbook has been written to provide you with program guidelines and helpful information. These policies encompass the academic, professional, and clinical behaviors that are expected in the program from our graduates. Students will be expected to acknowledge they have read and understand the contents of the RN to BSN Handbook, and agree to abide by the guidelines in each BSN course.

As such, this Handbook has not been written to replace the College Student Handbook, the College Catalog, the Procedures and Policies Manual, or any other official college document. It is to be considered a supplement to those documents. All nursing students are subject to the current rules and regulations set forth by NWFSC as well as the contents of this Handbook.

Sincerely,

Tanya Beauregard

Tanya Beauregard, MSN, RN, CNE

I. Preface

- II. This Student Handbook has been prepared for use by students enrolled in the NWFSC RN to BSN Program.
- III. The current *NWFSC Catalog*, which includes the *Student Handbook*, is found on the college website (<https://catalog.nwfsc.edu/>) and should be used by the student for terms, standards, and procedures applicable to all students and for general information.
- IV. This Student Handbook is meant to guide you through the NWFSC RN to BSN Program. It does not override or alter the requirements of federal, state, or local law, policy set by the District Board of Trustees of Northwest Florida Statute College, or other generally applicable College procedure. The contents of this Student Handbook may change, without individual notice, whenever determined necessary by the appropriate faculty and administrative bodies; the Student Handbook, in its most updated version, will continue to guide all RN to BSN students. Official notification of changes will be available in the appropriate department offices and provided via email to current RN to BSN students and the updated Student Handbook with changes will be posted on the RN to BSN program page on the college website. It is the student's obligation to know and adhere to all applicable program and NWFSC rules and regulations.
- V. Nothing in this handbook constitutes, is intended to constitute, or should be construed as creating a contract between a student and NWFSC.

II. Notice of Equal Access/Equal Opportunity and Nondiscrimination

Northwest Florida State College is dedicated to the concepts of equity and equal opportunity. It is the specific intention of the College not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, ethnicity, genetic information, national origin, religion, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, marital status, disability, or age in programs or activities, in its employment practices, or in the admission and treatment of students in its programs or activities.

If you have questions regarding compliance with the College's nondiscrimination policy or a complaint regarding harassment or discrimination, please contact the College's Equity Coordinator:

Roberta Mackey
Executive Director of Human Resources, Equity Coordinator
100 College Blvd. East, Niceville, FL 32578
Building: 310
Phone: (850) 729-5337
Email: mackeyr@nwfsc.edu

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (20 U.S.C. §§ 1681, et seq.) and its implementing regulations ([34 C.F.R. part 106](#)) prohibit and are designed to eliminate discrimination on the basis of sex in education programs or activities that receive federal financial assistance. The requirement not to discriminate in education programs or activities extends to admission and employment. Discrimination on the basis of sex includes, but is not limited to, sex-based harassment that is sufficiently serious to deny or limit an individual's ability to participate in or benefit from the program at issue. Examples of sex-based harassment include sexual harassment, sexual violence, and gender-based harassment. Northwest Florida State College complies with all aspects of Title IX and other federal and state laws regarding non-discrimination.

If you have questions regarding compliance with Title IX or if you have a complaint regarding sexual harassment or sexual violence, please contact the College's Title IX Coordinator:

Jessica Holley-Guiles
HR Specialist, Title IX Coordinator
100 College Blvd. East, Niceville, FL 32578
Building 310
Phone: (850) 729-5365
Email: holleyj4@nwfsc.edu

To read the College's Title IX procedure, [click here](#).

Title II of the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008 (GINA) protects applicants and employees from discrimination based on genetic information in hiring, promotion, discharge, pay, fringe benefits, job training, classification, referral, and other aspects of employment. GINA also restricts employers' acquisition of genetic information and strictly limits disclosure of genetic information. Genetic information includes information about genetic test of applicants, employees, or their family members; the manifestation of diseases or disorders in family members (family medical history); and requests for or receipt of genetic services by applicants, employees, or their family members.

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 Registered Nursing license (RN) to continue their studies in a baccalaureate program offered through Northwest Florida State College

Mission Statement

To improve lives by providing a high-quality, globally competitive education that is a catalyst for cultural, civic, and economic development throughout the region.

RN to BSN Program Mission

The mission of the NWFSC RN to BSN 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.

RN to BSN Program Philosophy

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 as 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.

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.

Program Goals

The goals of the RN to BSN program are to:

- prepare 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.

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.

Expected Student Outcomes

By the end of the program of study, RN to BSN students will:

1. Function effectively within nursing and interprofessional teams, demonstrating 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, humanities, and nursing theories to the promotion of health, integration of the nursing process, and care of the complex client.
3. Use information and technology to communicate, manage knowledge, mitigate error, and support decision-making in a variety of health care settings.
4. Use higher order critical thinking skills and a commitment to lifelong learning effectively by integrating current evidence-based practice and clinical expertise to determine their relevance, and application to the delivery of optimal nursing care and professional development.
5. Recognize the patient, family, designee, or community 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, educational needs, and environment.
6. Employ current theories and principles of leadership and management in the provision of safe quality nursing care.

RN to BSN Graduation Requirements

In addition to the program requirements which follow, students must satisfy all college graduation requirements specified in the applicable *NWFSC Catalog*.

- 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
- Meet the Speaking-Across-the-Curriculum, Writing-Across-the-Curriculum, Diversity, and Civic Literacy requirements set by the Florida State Board of Education.

- 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 articulation credits 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 and all Florida Common Course Prerequisites applicable to the RN to BSN degree program;
- Maintain compliance with the standards of acceptable conduct as outlined in the American Nurses Association Code of Ethics and the Florida Nurse Practice Act, or the Nurse Practice Act where the student is licensed.
- Maintain compliance with the rules and regulations, where appropriate, of NWFSC

Required RN to BSN Courses

Dimensions of Baccalaureate Nursing Practice	3.0
Portfolio I	1.0
Writing for Success in Nursing	1.0
Health Assessment	3.0
Clinical Pathophysiology	3.0
Evidence-Based Practice: Incorporating Nursing Research	3.0
Nursing Elective	3.0
Family and Community Health	5.0
Nursing Leadership and Management	5.0
Portfolio II	1.0
Health Care Issues	2.0
Total	30.0

- Upon completion of the above curriculum, 14.0 articulated credits based on pre-licensure coursework and RN licensure will be awarded.
- Students may complete these courses through a three, four, or five-semester track.

NWF Online

The nursing curriculum is delivered in a distance learning/online format with full support of NWF Online. Students should expect to spend the same amount of time and the same or greater amount of effort in completing course requirements as they would for courses delivered in the traditional format. 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 or diploma nursing program prior to enrollment.
- Documentation of current, clear/active, RN Licensure. Recent graduates of A.S. or diploma nursing programs who have not yet obtained an RN License may apply and

may be accepted on a conditional basis for one semester. The student must hold a current RN License prior to attending Experiential Learning experiences.

- Completion of all admission requirements for NWFSC.
- Submission of all official transcripts (high school and college/university).
- Minimum cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA) of 2.75 in all college credit course work and a minimum grade of “C” all state mandated BSN Common Prerequisite Courses applicable to the RN to BSN degree program. Depending on program capacity, students with less than a 2.75 may be admitted on a provisional basis. Ideally, prerequisites should be completed prior to enrolling in upper division nursing courses; however, all general education and BSN Common Prerequisite courses must be completed before enrolling in NUR 4615C- Family and Community Health.
- 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 six to eight credits in college, the student will need to complete six credits of foreign language before completing the program.)

(Additional enrollment conditions (e.g. proof of immunizations, CPR verification, drug screen, and background check compliance prior to Experiential Learning courses.)

Steps for the Admission Process

1. Complete **Northwest Florida State College** Online Admission application, including residency information
2. Select **RN to BSN** as the desired degree plan
3. Satisfy all requirements for admission to the College as an RN to BSN degree-seeking student
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

Selection Process

The Chair of RN-BSN Program and the office of Academic Records and Enrollment will review applications for eligibility. Applicants meeting eligibility requirements will be notified of selection via NWFSC student email.

Transfer Students

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

Program Expense

In addition to course tuition and college fees, expenditures specific to nursing courses include specialized equipment, software, a lab coat, computer and web cam, and transportation for Experiential Learning 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. Go to <https://www.nwfsc.edu/students/financialaid/> for more information. If you are eligible under VA or GI benefits, please contact our VA Success Center at va@nwfsc.edu or 850-729-5375.

Scholarships

Students may apply for scholarships through the NWFSC Foundation. Complete the scholarship questions during the college admissions application process. Students who have already applied for admission will receive a scholarship application link to their student email when the Foundation is taking applications. For more information, go to <https://www.nwfsc.edu/students/financialaid/scholarships/>.

Academic Advising

Students may receive unofficial academic advisement prior to admission when requested. Official advisement occurs after admission to the RN-BSN Program and prior to course registration. A degree audit via Degree Works is available to students through RaiderNet. Each student is assigned a BSN faculty advisor once they are admitted to the program. The faculty advisor and the student will discuss the Degree Works worksheet at the beginning of the program and an individualized plan of study is established with the student. If students need to revise the original plan of study, they should contact their faculty advisor to develop a revised plan of study. If they have questions or concerns, 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 strongly advised to talk with their program faculty advisor prior to withdrawing from courses or making changes to their plan of study. If a student finds it necessary to withdraw from all courses in a given semester, the student is required to speak with a Student Success Navigator prior to withdrawing.

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). If any RN to BSN student believes that the POS cannot be followed, the student should appeal to their program faculty advisor 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 and or the Nurse Practice Act in the location where student is licensed. Also students must maintain compliance with the rules and regulations of NWFSC. Failure to comply with these standards may result in dismissal from the RN to BSN program or other appropriate action.

Dress Code

The NWFSC RN to BSN uniform for Experiential Learning experiences is according to the facility requirements, including a NWFSC RN to BSN nametag and/or student ID. Students should always look professional.

- Pants should not bind hips or legs.
- Clinical attire should be clean and pressed.

- Closed toe shoes.
- 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 are appropriate, no jeans (of any color), sweatpants, tank tops, shorts, miniskirts, or open toed shoes are allowed.

Student Support – Academic and 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 <https://www.nwfsc.edu/students/campus-services/free-tutoring/> or visit the Academic Success Center in Building 500 on the Niceville Campus.

Students with special needs for which accommodations may be appropriate to assist in pursuing the program should contact the NWFSC Accommodation Resource Center in Building 500 on the Niceville Campus, email (arc@nwfsc.edu), or call 729-6079 (TTY

1-800-955-8771 or Voice 1-800-955-8770). Go to <https://nwfsc.edu/accommodations/> for more information. Students needing assistance are encouraged to make contact as early as possible.

Course Completion

1. Students must complete all nursing courses with a final grade of 'C' or better.
2. Students may repeat the same clinical course only once, and on a space-available basis.
3. Students are allowed to repeat two different nursing courses before mandatory withdrawal from the nursing major.
4. 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 and advisors from NWFSC are available to assist students who wish to resume their RN to BSN studies.

A written request for readmission must be submitted to the NWFSC Chair of RN-BSN Program. Readmission will be determined upon consideration of the student's record with respect to the following:

- Adherence to the program's admission/eligibility requirements
- Overall academic record
- Cumulative GPA at the time of program departure
- Semester GPA at the time of program departure
- Previous pattern of student progression within a course and the program
- Program enrollment (course and program capacity)

- 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 content knowledge through written examination and/or clinical assessment. An interview with the committee and/or recommendations from past RN to BSN professors 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. NWFSC 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.

Course Grades

NWFSC 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. NWFSC RN to BSN program uses letter grades.

NWFSC 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. All course objectives (for NUR/NSP courses) must be completed successfully with grade of 'C' (minimum 75 percent) or better in order to progress in the nursing program. Instructors file course grades with the Director of Academic Records and Registration 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 inability to complete course requirements by the end of the semester. In all cases, however, the student must be making significant progress in the course as determined by the course instructor before being eligible for a grade of Incomplete. An incomplete is the prerogative of the instructor, not the student, and *may* be granted at the discretion of the faculty in consultation with the Chair of RN-BSN Program. 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 NWFSC 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.

Course Activity (Attendance)

Faculty highly recommend that students log in 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 log in for seven days and turn in one assignment late are required to meet with the instructor (in person, via phone, or via video conferencing) for counseling to problem solve and help the student to develop an action plan to master the course content. The instructor will provide a written synopsis of the counseling session including the action plan to the student via email and to the student's program advisor. Should the same problem continue after counseling, the student may be administratively withdrawn from the course or 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 courses that have a clinical component or for certain general education and prerequisite courses. Students should contact the Chair of RN-BSN Program or the appropriate department to determine eligibility. 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. Eligibility criteria and other information about the Course Challenge option is published in the *NWFSC Catalog* under *Student Records/Credit by Alternative Means of Study*.

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 will be required to complete an attendance verification assignment prior to the end of the schedule adjustment period or may be academically withdrawn from the course.

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 plan of study 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 the course instructor, assigned faculty advisor, or Chair of RN-BSN Program to explore other alternatives before taking such action.

Students must follow appropriate NWFSC procedures when withdrawing from a course. Students who do not follow the required NWFSC withdrawal procedures will be awarded the grade they earned.

Student-initiated withdrawal from all NUR/NSP courses in a given term is tantamount to a student-initiated withdrawal from the program. A student considering withdrawal should meet with the assigned faculty 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 plan of study or may withdraw from the program. Some modification in course sequencing may be possible without an official withdrawal from the program. The student must contact the assigned faculty 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 may be requested to complete an *Exit Interview* with a Student Success Navigator as part of the withdrawal process.

C. Dismissal from the Program

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

- a. Falsification of records or reports
- b. Cheating on an examination, quiz, or any other assignment
- c. Plagiarism, which is the presentation of another's work as if it were the student's own
- d. Violation of client and/or agency confidential information
- e. Violation of the NWFSC student conduct policies
- f. Violation of clinical site policies or procedures, including confidentiality and HIPAA
- g. Violation of the American Nurses Association Code of Ethics
- h. Violation of the Florida Nurse Practice Act and/or Nurse Practice Act of the location where student is licensed
- i. Loss of a current clear/active Registered Nursing License
- j. Testing positive for illicit drugs

See the *NWFSC Catalog, Student Handbook* section for additional reasons for dismissal. Students remain subject to the Student Code of Conduct, provided in the [Student Handbook](#).

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 asked to withdraw 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 from the program.

A counseling form will be issued to the student and/or a faculty conference will be scheduled when any behavior is identified 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 Chair of RN-BSN Program with faculty member(s); further progression in the program will be contingent upon the approval of by the Chair of the RN-BSN program and nursing faculty.

General college policies and procedures are published in the *NWFSC Catalog, Student Handbook* section, which is available online at <https://catalog.nwfsc.edu/>.

College policies, as well as program policies and procedures, extend to all sites where students are engaged in the role of NWFSC nursing student. Students remain subject to the Student Code of Conduct, provided in the *Student Handbook*.

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 within two weeks of the grade posting. If the discussion does not result in the student's understanding of the grade and/or the grading process, the student may contact the Chair of RN-BSN Program to discuss the assignment and grade in question.

Should any concern outside of grading need to be discussed with the Chair of RN-BSN Program, students should know that an "open door" policy exists to discuss any issues 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 *NWFSC Catalog, Student Handbook* section.

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 expected to complete the student evaluation of instruction offered at the course level each semester, and to participate in 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 online discussions. Students who demonstrate unprofessional behavior online or in clinical will be asked to leave the setting.

Children are not permitted in labs, clinicals or other facilities where hazardous conditions may exist. To view policy, refer to the college handbook within the college catalog at [https:// catalog.nwfsc.edu/](https://catalog.nwfsc.edu/). Childcare is the responsibility of the parent(s)/student.

Clinical Experiential Learning Attendance

Clinical Experiential 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. Periodic assignments will be held to evaluate the student's performance during the course. Student comments are encouraged. The student and instructor will share responsibility for evaluation of the student's progress during the course.

Prompt attendance and preparation for clinical Experiential Learning experiences are required. The faculty will follow the students' progress in the clinical facility either in person or through discussions with the assigned facilitator. The facilitator may dismiss a student from an Experiential Learning 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.

Not accessing and engaging in an online course may hinder a student's ability to achieve the objectives of the course and are inconsistent with professional behavior. If problems are noted with a student not accessing a course, 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 problems with the student accessing the online course continues, the student will be issued a deficiency letter. Any further incidences may result in failure of the course and/or dismissal from the nursing program.

Emergency Absence from the Experiential Learning Experience

In the event that the student must be absent from the Experiential Learning experience, it is the student's responsibility to call the assigned facilitator a minimum of one hour prior to the start of the experience; the course instructor must also be notified in a timely manner (during regular business hours). 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.

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 NWFSC 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 at the NWFSC Learning Resource Center or online at lrc.nwfsc.edu.

Credit for late or otherwise deficient papers/written assignments will be reduced/adjusted according to the policies of the individual instructor as specified in each course syllabus. 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 Learning Management System.

Liability Insurance

Nursing is a profession in which its members are accountable. Liability insurance coverage beyond that provided by the NWFSC for the clinical Experiential Learning experience is the responsibility of each student.

Computer Access

All students must have access to a computer with a webcam built in or as an available attachment. The student is to be proficient in word processing, e-mail, file transfer and literary searches.

Registration is completed online, RN to BSN courses are online and departmental and college communications are sent via e-mail and/or via the course in Blackboard, the learning management system (LMS) used by the college. 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 NWFSC Fort Walton Beach Campus and on the NWFSC Niceville Campus in the Learning Resource Center (LRC), Building 500. LRC computers are available to students during LRC operation hours. Hours may vary from term to term.

For students who wish to use a home computer most computers built within the past 2-3 years will meet your online learning needs.

Email

NWFSC student email is the official method of communication between faculty and students and is often a key factor in successful completion of course work. Active students are expected to check their student email account regularly.

Departmental Committees and Activities

The NWFSC 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.

Departmental Student Records

Upon admission to the nursing program, the student's RN to BSN program files are maintained and secured electronically. Only faculty and other appropriate institutional officials have access to these records. General college records are maintained in the NWFSC Office of Academic Records and Enrollment. NWF College adheres to state and federal policies regarding the confidentiality of student records.

Name/Address Changes

Changes in address, telephone number, or name change must be reported to the NWFSC Office of Academic Records and Enrollment and the NWFSC Department of Nursing.

Currently enrolled students may make changes to address and telephone number online through NWFSC RaiderNet student account. Name changes require legal paperwork to be submitted to the Office of Academic Records and Registration.

Electronic Academic Records

Students' unofficial academic records are available in RaiderNet student account (select Student Records; view Degree Works and/or Academic Transcript). Students may also order official transcripts online by selecting that option in RaiderNet/Student Records.

II. Health and Safety

Health Requirements

In order to participate in clinical laboratory experiences, you must submit all required forms and proof of immunity to infectious diseases through CastleBranch. All forms, which you will download from Castle Branch, must be completed thoroughly, as they will be reviewed by Castle Branch personnel and updated throughout the course of the RN-BSN program. All students are required to comply with guidelines regarding tuberculin test or chest x-ray, Hepatitis B vaccination (or declination), Measles, Mumps, Rubella, Varicella, and Tetanus before enrolling in clinical courses. Clinical facilities may also require proof of influenza vaccination during posted influenza season or may require additional immunizations. 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 (TB Skin test) must have been administered within the last 12 months annually while in the nursing program. A QuantiFERON-TB Gold test will also be accepted. If the test is positive, a chest x-ray and report of a healthcare provider's recommendations must be attached. If student is known to have a positive reaction, the student must submit a report of a recent chest x-ray. After

initial chest x-ray, ANNUAL evaluation/screening for tuberculosis signs/systems must be signed by a healthcare provider and 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 quantitative titer) of immunity. *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. A quantitative titer (lab report required) is acceptable.

Varicella Titer

One of the following is required: 1 vaccination OR positive antibody titer (lab report required). If titer is negative or equivocal, student will need to receive 1 booster vaccine.

Personal Assumption of Responsibility for Disease &/or Injury

NWFSC 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 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/Acute Illness. You are responsible for informing your preceptor of any health condition which increases 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 or preceptor, 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 Chair of RN-BSN Program. Should you be unable to meet the program standards, you may be dismissed from the program. You may appeal the dismissal by contacting the NWFSC Chair of RN-BSN Program. The Student Code of Conduct and Student Appeals and Grievances standards are stated in the [Student Handbook](#).

Substance Use and/or Abuse

- a. Substance abuse is inconsistent with the ethics of nursing, the Nursing program and the College.
- b. Substance use/abuse adversely affects cognitive, sensory, affective and psychomotor behaviors which can be life threatening to self and others.
- c. You may be asked by the Nursing Program, NWFSC, 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.
- d. You will be asked to submit to drug screening as a component of the admission or readmission procedure.
- e. Random drug screening costs will be paid by the college. You are responsible for drug screening costs for individual screening, initial admission, or readmission.
- f. Refusal to comply with requested screening within the time frame directed will result in dismissal from the nursing program.

Per the NWFSC Student Handbook, Substance Abuse section, found in the 2021-22 College Catalog, and Board Policy HR 4.00, ***NWFSC is a drug-free work place . The unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession, or use of alcohol or a controlled substance is prohibited in and on NWFSC owned and controlled property, except for events specifically approved to include alcohol. Students in violation will be subject to disciplinary action as stated in the Student Code of Conduct published in the Student Handbook/College Catalog and may be subject to criminal prosecution.*** Students must also comply with any and all drug-free workplace requirements imposed through course-mandated student activities, such as offsite work at clinical facilities.

Health Services

Mental Health counseling referrals are available to all NWFSC students. Please see the NWF Catalog, *Student Handbook* section, "Mental Health Counseling Services" for more information.

Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) Certification

Students are required to have CPR certification (American Heart Association BLS for Healthcare

Providers or American Red Cross BLS certification) 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 submitted to CastleBranch during the admission process and may be requested at a clinical facility. Students may not attend clinical if their CPR certification expires.

III. Clinical Experiential Learning Policies

Confidentiality

Students will have access to confidential medical/personal client and family information, and to sensitive agency information as part of the Experiential 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/experiential learning facility. Students are required to abide by the policies and procedures of the agency in which their experiential learning experience is scheduled. Violation of this policy may result in dismissal from the nursing program.

HIPAA Statement

All those in healthcare must 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 to 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 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.

Transportation

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

Errors and Incidents in Experiential Learning Experiences

All adverse or critical incidents occurring in the clinical 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 site, withdrawn from the clinical course and/or dismissed from the program at the discretion of the instructor and program administrators.

Critical Incident: A critical incident, defined by the instructor or experience facilitator (based on the expertise and knowledge of the instructor and facilitator) and supported by established standards of nursing practice, is any incident in which the health or well-being of a client is threatened or jeopardized due to the action of the student. If the facilitator prevents an error, the student is still at fault.

In the context of the NWFSC RN-BSN program, 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 and Regulations. Failure to observe nursing ethics and legalities, e.g., performing in the Experiential Learning setting area while chemically impaired or ill with a communicable disease; breach of confidentiality; falsifying information, 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.

Students as a 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 area, nor can they be duplicated for any reason. No chart may be reviewed for personal reasons.



**NORTHWEST FLORIDA
STATE COLLEGE**

100 COLLEGE BOULEVARD EAST | NICEVILLE, FL 32578 | (850) 678 - 5111 | WWW.NWFSC.EDU

Northwest Florida State College is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges to award associate and baccalaureate degrees. Contact the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools at 1866 Southern Lane, Decatur, Georgia 30033-4097 or call 404-679-4500 for questions about the accreditation of Northwest Florida State College. Northwest Florida State College is committed to equal access/equal opportunity in its programs, activities, and employment. Materiales de la Universidad son disponibles en Española llamando a la Oficina de Admisiones de Northwest Florida State College al 850-678-5111.

NWFSC Bachelor Degree Nursing Program HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM

Please initial each for declaration of understanding:

_____ I understand and will comply with all college, clinical and didactic (theory) requirements throughout the Nursing Program.

_____ I understand and acknowledge that the inability to meet the physical, psychological or other requirements will result in removal from the clinical site which, in turn, will result in a failing grade in clinical.

_____ I understand that individual physical clinical requirements include but *are not limited to*, rapid pace walking, extended periods of standing, lifting patients, transporting patients, cleaning up rooms, cleaning up after patients, cleaning mobile and portable equipment, and other task associated with patient care.

_____ I understand that some of the physiological requirements include, but *are not limited to*, direct contact with patient and bodily fluids, communication with difficult patients and others, and operating room blood and sterile protocol scenarios.

_____ I understand that other clinical requirements include, but *are not limited to*, competency requirements, safety of self and patients (also a part of physical and psychological requirements), following the Program Handbook, clinical syllabus, health and safety requirements, and the College Handbook and rules therein.

_____ I understand that much of patient documentation is computer based and I will be responsible for learning the use of computer documentation software to access patient information and document patient care.

_____ I understand the information in the Student Handbook and course syllabi is subject to change. I will be held accountable for these changes. Any changes will be provided to me in written form.

_____ I understand that I may be dismissed from the Nursing Program for failure to follow any of the policies outlined in the College Catalog, College Student Handbook, and the Nursing Student Handbook.

_____ I understand that if I have any questions about the College or Nursing Student Handbook, I need to personally address the concerns with the appropriate parties using proper chain of command.

_____ I understand that the minimum grade for NUR theory courses is a 75% and failure to meet that score will remove me from the Nursing Program.

_____ I understand that an average score of 75% must be earned on theory examinations in each course; failure to meet that average will remove me from the Nursing Program.

_____ I understand that dismissal from the clinical site may result in a failing grade ("F") for the clinical course and dismissal from the Nursing Program.

_____ I understand that readmission to the Nursing Program is not guaranteed and that I will only be offered one readmission attempt.

Student Name

Signature

Date