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WKU© SCHOOL OF NURSING AND ALLIED HEALTH

Bachelor of Science in Nursing
RN to BSN Student Handbook
2025-2026

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Students at Western Kentucky University are expected to review and follow policies found in the University Student Handbook. In addition, nursing students are expected to read and follow specific program policies found in the RN to BSN and SONAH Student Handbooks. The provisions of this document do not constitute a contract between the student and the RN to BSN program.

REGISTERED NURSE TO BACCALAUREATE PROGRAM
RN to BSN PROGRAM - SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Registered Nurse (RN) to Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) Education

WKU nursing faculty realize there are diverse pathways toward achievement of the baccalaureate degree. The RN to BSN faculty is committed to preparing students who are currently as the associate degree level who wish to continue their education. The purpose of the RN to BSN Program in nursing is to provide the knowledge base necessary prior to advancing to the graduate degree level.

The curriculum integrates knowledge from the biological, behavioral, physical, and social sciences, and liberal arts to provide a foundation for advancing professional nursing practice. Learning experiences occur in a variety of health care settings and progress from basic to complex activities to achieve program outcomes.

Organizing Framework

The RN to BSN program curricula content upholds the nursing profession's standards of practice. These standards are based on:

- *The Essentials of Baccalaureate Education for Professional Nursing Practice* (AACN, 2021)
- *Code of Ethics for Nursing with Interpretation Statements,* (ANA, 2015)
- *Nursing: Scope and Standards of Practice,* (4th Edition, ANA, 2021)
- *Guide to Nursing's Social Policy Statement* (ANA, 2015)
- *Quality and Safety Education for Nurses (QSEN),* (AACN, 2021)

Accreditation

The Registered Nurse (RN) to Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) degree program in nursing at WKU is accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE).

CCNE
655 K Street NW, Suite 750
Washington DC, 20001
(202) 887-06791
https://www.aacnnursing.org/CCNE-Accreditation/CCNE-Accredited-Programs

RN to BSN Program Outcomes (Effective Fall 2025):

- Apply knowledge from the behavioral, biological, physical, and social sciences, as well as the liberal arts, to integrate, translate, and apply evolving nursing knowledge in clinical practice, fostering sound clinical judgment and innovation in nursing practice. (AACN Domain 1: Knowledge for Nursing Practice).
- Use evidence-based strategies to promote equitable health outcomes, quality improvement, prevent disease, and manage conditions across diverse populations through collaboration with communities, public health organizations, and healthcare systems. (AACN Domain 3: Population Health; AACN Domain 7: Systems-Based Practice).
- Demonstrate leadership, resilience, and a commitment to lifelong learning by engaging in self-reflection, professional development, and activities that enhance personal well-being and nursing expertise. (AACN Domain 10: Personal, Professional, and Leadership Development).
- Use critical thinking skills to synthesize and apply nursing research and evidence-based practice to improve patient care, contribute to nursing knowledge, and enhance healthcare systems. (AACN Domain 4: Scholarship for Nursing Discipline).
- Engage in effective communication and collaboration with interprofessional teams, patients, families, and communities to optimize healthcare experiences and outcomes. (AACN Domain 6: Interprofessional Partnerships).
- Deliver holistic, compassionate, and individualized nursing care that respects patient preferences, cultural values, and social determinants of health, empowering patients to make informed healthcare decisions and participate in their care. (AACN Domain 2: Person-Centered Care).
- Integrate informatics and healthcare technologies to support clinical decision-making, enhance patient care, and improve healthcare delivery in professional nursing practice. (AACN Domain 8: Informatics and Healthcare Technologies).
- Demonstrate accountability, integrity, and adherence to the Nursing Code of Ethics and Standards of Professional Nursing Practice while fostering a professional identity that reflects nursing's core values. (AACN Domain 9: Professionalism).
- Integrate principles of patient safety, quality improvement, and risk reduction to deliver high-quality, equitable nursing care while minimizing harm and enhancing system effectiveness. (Domain 5: Quality and Safety).

Revised and Approved 04/2025- BSN Program Faculty

Academic Advisement

All students are assigned to a RN to BSN faculty advisor at the beginning of the RN to BSN program. Students are responsible for initiating advisement meetings each semester and as needed. When communicating with their advisor or any faculty, the student's WKU email address must be used throughout the program. Students are responsible for checking their email on a regular basis for updates and instructions from their course and clinical faculty.

CURRICULUM AND ACADEMIC PROGRESSION
RN to BSN Course Sequence

Spring Semester	Hours	Summer Semester	Hours
NURS 446 (Public Health Concepts for the RN)	3	**NURS 346** (Health Assessment Across the Lifespan for the RN)	3
NURS 447 (Applications of Public Health Concepts for the RN)	3	**NURS 347** (Concepts in Pharmacology for the RN)	3
NURS 491 (Professional Issues)	3	**NURS 348** (Concepts of Disease for the RN)	3
NURS 452 (Care of the Critically Ill Patient for the RN)	3		
Total Hours	**12**	**Total Hours**	**9**

3rd Semester Nursing	Hours	General Education Requirements	Hours
NURS 349 (Health Promotion & Disease Prevention in Diverse Populations for the RN)	3	Developmental Psychology	3
		Human Nutrition	3
NURS 350 (Leadership & Management Concepts for the RN)	3	Statistics	3
NURS 427(Introduction to Research & Evidence-Based Practice for the RN)	3	Specific Electives	12-18
		Graduation Requirements	varies
Total Hours	**9**	**Total General Education Hours**	**90**

**Note: Must meet the 120-hour university graduation requirement.

- RN to BSN Curriculum total credit hours = 30
- A minimum grade of "C" is required in all nursing courses.
- Clinical courses may be held on nights and weekends based on clinical agency availability.

Evolve Elsevier's Nursing Education Student Resources

The RN to BSN Program utilizes HESI products throughout the curriculum to promote student learning success. These include:

- Sherpath
- Online Courses
- eBooks
- ShadowHealth Digital Clinical Experiences
- Simulation Learning Suite

RN to BSN Grading Policy

Grading Scale (based on percent of available POINTS in each class):

A	90 – 100%
B	80 – 90%
C	70 – 83%
D	60 – 69%
F	59% or below

Students are evaluated on the number of points obtained within a given course. The points are changed to a letter grade based on the number of points obtained within the class (see class syllabi for details).

Assignments submitted past the due date and time, without prior notification, may receive a zero. At the instructor's discretion, assignments may be completed after the due date with a 10% reduction in total points for each day late.

Please note: An overall average of 70% must be achieved to pass an RN to BSN courses.

No Rounding Policy: Final nursing course averages will be recorded as a whole number and will not be rounded up or down. For example, a student who earns the final course average of 69.99% will be assigned a letter grade of D.

APA Format: Faculty require APA format for formal written assignments. APA resources are available on the SONAH webpage and on the student organizational sites on Blackboard; however, they are not a substitution for the APA Manual required for some nursing courses.

RN TO BSN PROGRAM COMPLETION: Students admitted to the RN to BSN program should complete the nursing curriculum within 3 years of the admission date. Students must achieve a grade of "C" or higher in all didactic and clinical nursing courses. Students must successfully complete all RN to BSN courses and university general education requirements to successfully obtain a Baccalaureate degree.

Retention

In the event of one nursing course failure, a student may request to repeat the failed course one time.

- The students should contact the course faculty requesting to re-take the course.
- Requests will be considered for the next semester the course is scheduled to be offered and is contingent upon space available.

Academic Dismissal: In the event of a 2nd nursing course failure, the student will be dismissed from the program.

Readmission to the RN to BSN Nursing Program

The RN to BSN program will accept applications from students who have been dismissed from a nursing program on a case-by-case basis. Students seeking readmission after RN to BSN program withdrawal or dismissal must apply for readmission to the RN to BSN program by February 1 (for summer admission), July 1 (for fall admission) or by September 1 (for spring admission). Readmission is contingent upon meeting admissions criteria, admission committee approval, space and resource availability.

Withdrawal and Audit

Students planning to withdraw from a nursing course are expected to make an appointment with the course coordinator and/or program coordinator for further instruction. In accordance with university policy, students may opt to withdraw from a course or change from credit to audit on or before the deadline. https://www.wku.edu/registrar/withdrawal.php

Students may audit the didactic component with permission from the course faculty. The WKU audit policy is found here: https://catalog.wku.edu/undergraduate/academic-information/academic-requirements-regulations/#text

Withdrawal from the RN to BSN Nursing Program

Students who withdraw from the program should complete the Exit Survey by clicking "OK" at the following link: https://forms.gle/Mib6TnTwLsunkW2X8.

Communication Via the List Serve

The list serve provides a mechanism for communication to the entire group of currently admitted students. All students are subscribed to the list serve shortly after admission to the program. The Program Coordinator and their designee are the administrators for the list serve: rntobsn@lists.wku.edu

ONLINE LEARNING

Nursing is a professional program of study and students are expected to be attentive and engaged in the learning process.

Class Preparation: Students are expected to read the assignments and are responsible for information presented.

Audio/Video Recording: To preserve patient confidentiality, all faculty and student recorded content is restricted to nursing students use only and may not be shared with others, nor published on social media outlets. Violation of confidentiality will result in a professional conduct violation or dismissal from the nursing program.

RN TO BSN STUDENT TESTING / GRADING POLICIES

Violation of the following policies and procedures will be considered academic dishonesty and will lead to consequences outlined in the Academic Dishonesty Policy.

Exam Policies

- All exams are subject to audit for detection of academic dishonesty.
- Students must not communicate before, during, or after an exam with any other person about the content of the exam.
- Exams will be electronic/computer based. Faculty may change the test delivery method at their discretion.
- Exam questions and/or content of any exam questions are not to be copied in any form: orally, electronically or in writing. A violation would result in a penalty at the discretion of the faculty. A meeting may be required with the RN to BSN Program Coordinator and Director of the School of Nursing.
- Unless testing instructions state the format is an open-book exam, students cannot use any electronic device or resource except for required testing software and designated electronic devices.
- Students must not attempt to disable or tamper with exam software security features.
- Students may not request points be added to their grade.
- Faculty members are the content experts for the exam.
- Individual student appointment requests can be made via email for further content review with faculty within one week of an exam.
- Faculty recommend that students who score less than 70% on any exam or who at any time in the semester drop below a 70% average make an appointment with faculty for an academic conference. Students should review the gradebook on Blackboard frequently.

Student Absence from Examinations/Tests

- Students are expected to complete all examinations within the posted testing window. Because this program is fully online and assessments are asynchronous, students should plan to ensure adequate time and reliable

technology to complete all required exams.

- **Advance Notification:** Students must notify the instructor *prior to the exam due date and time* if they are unable to complete an examination during the designated testing window. Notification must occur through the communication method outlined in the course (e.g., Blackboard message or WKU email).
- **Extenuating Circumstances:** Requests for a make-up exam must include justification consistent with extenuating circumstances such as documented illness, family emergency, or verified significant technical failure.
- **Faculty Determination:** Faculty members will determine whether the justification for missing the scheduled exam window is sufficient.
    - **If the absence is approved:** The student will be provided a make-up exam with its own defined testing window, without penalty.
    - **If the absence is *not* approved:** A make-up exam *may* be permitted at faculty discretion. In these cases, a **grade reduction of up to 10%** may be applied, as specified in the course syllabus. The make-up exam will have a designated make-up window and may differ in format from the original exam.
- **Make-Up Exam Format:** Make-up examinations may use alternate test items, formats (e.g., short answer, essay), or adjusted testing parameters at the instructor's discretion.
- **Technology Responsibility:** Students are responsible for ensuring reliable internet access and functional technology during the exam window. Technical difficulties must be documented immediately with IT support. Undocumented or repeated technology issues may not qualify as extenuating circumstances
- Refer to the course syllabus for any additional criteria.

Meeting with the Faculty, Program Coordinator or Director of the School of Nursing

While any student can make an appointment to meet with the course faculty, the Program Coordinator or the Director of the School of Nursing about their grades and the grading process, this does not constitute a grade appeal and will not result in a change of grade after the final grade has been reviewed by the faculty member and posted on TopNet.

Extended Testing Progression Policy for ESL Students

Speaking a native language other than English is not considered an ADA Accommodation by the NCSBN. An ESL student may request implementation of the ESL extended testing progression policy, which allows ESL students to adjust to nursing exams while translating back and forth from English to their native language. Extended testing will be designated on a case-by-case basis and is not guaranteed. Extended testing does not guarantee a private or distraction free environment.

Minimum requirements:

- Must have designation as an ESL student.
- Must have completed the TOEFL for entry into the WKU RN to BSN program meeting program requirement.

Students must meet with the designated course faculty for each semester at least once every semester to discuss progress. Students may choose to relinquish their testing accommodation at any time during the program by notifying the RN to BSN program coordinator. Once testing accommodations are relinquished, they will not be reinstated.

ADA Accommodation Statement and Accommodations

In compliance with university policy, students with disabilities who require academic and/or auxiliary accommodation must contact the Student Accessibility Resource Center located in Downing Student Union, 1074. SARC can be reached by phone number at 270-745-5004 [270-745-3030 TTY] or via email at sarc.connect@wku.edu. Please do not request accommodations directly from the professor or instructor without a faculty notification letter (FNL) from the Student Accessibility Resource Center.

Any student who is admitted into the WKU RN to BSN Nursing Program and has a Faculty Notification Letter (FNL) from the Student Accessibility Resource Center (SARC) allowing testing accommodations will receive the identified accommodations.

CLINICAL POLICIES

Clinical Attendance: Clinical experience is essential for student fulfillment of program and course objectives.

- Unexcused absences and tardiness will affect the course grade and/or continuation in the program.
- Tardiness may result in the student not being admitted to the clinical, which may be counted as an absence. Tardiness is defined as one minute after the designated start time. Admittance to the clinical will be at the discretion of the clinical faculty.
- All clinical absences require make-up assignments designated by the course faculty.
- Based on clinical agency and/or clinical faculty availability, clinical experiences may include evenings, nights, and/or weekend assignments.
- Students are responsible for providing their own transportation and auto insurance for all clinical experiences.

Excused Absence: Student must provide verbal or written notification of clinical absence to the clinical instructor PRIOR to the start of the learning experience unless an extenuating circumstance prohibits notification. Faculty may request documentation for more than one absence.

Unexcused Absence: When a student fails to notify the course faculty of the absence PRIOR to the beginning of clinical, the absence will be an unexcused absence. When a student fails to notify the course faculty of the absence prior to the beginning of clinical, the absence will be regarded as a "no call, no show" situation and result in an unexcused absence.

A student with one unexcused absence in an assigned clinical experience will receive a clinical warning and earn zero points for any make-up assignments. This student must also attend a follow-up meeting with the course coordinator. Students with two unexcused clinical absences will be dismissed from the course and a grade of "F" recorded in TopNet. If extenuating circumstances prevent the student from communicating the absence, the student may petition the course faculty for a waiver of this policy. Students who seek this waiver are required to provide documentation of the nature of this serious event and their fitness to return to clinical.

RN to BSN Dress Code Policy for Visiting Clinical Agencies

- Students are expected to wear program approved attire in all settings where they are representatives of the WKU RN to BSN program.
- RN to BSN ID Badge: Unless instructed otherwise, students are to wear the RN to BSN ID badge in clinical on the front upper torso. No other ID badges, pins or buttons are allowed. A WKU or plain retractable badge holder may be worn.
- The community clinical uniform includes the WKU SON polo shirt or plain polo shirt; tan, navy or black pant/skirt; crew or knee socks; and closed toe shoes.
    - Pant length should stop at the top of the shoe. Pants may have a straight leg or banding at the ankle.
    - Skirts must fall at or below the knee.
    - The clothing must be clean, without wrinkles, in good repair, and of the appropriate size.
- Shoes and Socks: Athletic or nursing shoes with enclosed heels and toes should be worn with the uniform. Shoes must be clean and in good condition and without holes. Socks must always be worn.
- Nails: Nails must be clean and no longer than ¼ inch beyond the tip of the finger. No polish of any kind or artificial nails is permitted.
- Hair: During clinical, hair should be clean, neat, well-groomed, and pulled away from the face. Shoulder length and longer hair must be pinned up and pulled away from the face to prevent contamination of the patient care area. Distracting hair color is not permitted, and hair accessories such as hair ties and clips should be non-decorative, simple, and coordinate with the RN to BSN community uniform.
- Head coverings: Head coverings must not interfere with the use of a stethoscope and asepsis. The head cover must be red, black, or neutral in color.
- Beards/mustaches: Facial hair must be clean and trimmed to ½ inch or less in length.
- Tattoos: Tattoos, regardless of size and/or type, may be required to be completely covered and not visible when visiting certain clinical sites. The clinical instructor will inform students of clinical site policies.
- Jewelry/Piercings: During clinical, one small earring in each ear, and one ring with no or low prongs and a wristwatch with a second hand are allowed. No other jewelry may be worn on the face/head/neck/ears or visible body parts. Piercings in the tongue are considered visible.
- Makeup: During clinical, makeup should be natural tones with no extreme colors.
- Food, beverages, and chewing gum are not permitted in patient care areas.
- Personal Hygiene must be maintained. No perfume, body spray, or smell of smoke is permitted in patient care areas.
- Use of tobacco or tobacco alternatives are not allowed in the clinical setting.
- A student who violates the required dress code may be dismissed from the community or healthcare setting and receive demerits as outlined in the *Professional Standards Evaluation Tool (PSET).*
- Faculty will inform students of any additional uniform requirements for specific clinical experiences.

Professional Standards for Clinical

NOTICE: *The Professional Standards Evaluation Tool* (PSET) is used to inform students regarding expected behaviors and professional nursing standards. The PSET is located in the Application of Public Health for the Registered Nurse Blackboard site.

- Violation of the standards will result in demerits.
- The number of demerits will double for repeating the same professional standard violation after the first violation.
- In the event of a third violation of the same standard, or the combination of any violations exceed ten total demerits, a meeting with the student, clinical faculty course faculty, and program coordinator is conducted and a written *Professional Conduct Violation* (PCV) is issued.
- Clinical failure occurs when violations exceed 16 demerits or when behaviors on the PSET are violated.

STUDENT PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

RN to BSN Student Representative Guidelines

As part of student governance in the RN to BSN program, a student representative and an alternate are elected in each cohort by classmates. The representatives elected should be professional and be able to speak in front of a group. Students are encouraged to present program issues to the RN to BSN Program Coordinator in writing and should follow the PICC format.

PICC format:
P = Particulars
I = Ideas for Improvement
C = Compliments
C = Concerns

Membership in Nursing Organizations

As a member of the nursing profession, students are encouraged to be active members in nursing professional organizations.

- Students in the RN to BSN program may be invited to join Kappa Theta, the local chapter of Sigma. This organization is recognized as the International Honor Society of Nursing and serves to advance knowledge, promote learning, and foster service through nursing scholarship and leadership.
- American Nurses Association (ANA)/KNA/TNA centers around advancing the nursing profession and improving healthcare.
- Other specialized nursing organization.

RN to BSN Program Awards

Outstanding Student Award

This award recognizes overall excellence as demonstrated by GPA and some or all the following:

- professionalism
- service

Helen Turner Award

The Helen Turner Award, established in 1980 by the 7th District Kentucky Nurses' Association (REACH Chapter presently) pays tribute to the outstanding qualities of this nurse. Ms. Turner served as a nursing leader in the western part of Kentucky and worked diligently to improve the quality of nursing education and patient care. The award is presented to a student in the RN to BSN program who meets the following criteria:

- Active in KNA
- Demonstrated leadership ability
- Demonstrated enthusiasm for the professional organization
- Achieved a grade point average of 3.0 or above