

NORTHWEST
FLORIDA
STATE
COLLEGE

2019-2020
RN_{TO}BSN
Student Handbook

NORTHWEST FLORIDA STATE COLLEGE

Registered Nurse to Bachelor of Science in Nursing

Northwest Florida State College
Registered Nurse to Bachelor of Science in Nursing
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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

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Preface

This Student Handbook has been prepared for use by students enrolled in the NWF State College RN to BSN Program.

The current *NWF State College Catalog*, which includes the *Student Handbook* is found on the college website (<https://catalog.nwfsc.edu/>) and should be used by the student for general information.

The NWF State College 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 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 NWF State College rules and regulations.

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

Notice of Equal Access/Equal Opportunity and Nondiscrimination

NWF State College is committed to an environment that embraces diversity, respects the rights of all individuals, is open and accessible, and is free of harassment and discrimination based on but not limited to, ethnicity, race, creed, color, religion, age, disability, sex, marital status, national origin, political opinions or affiliations, veteran status, and genetic information. The College does not discriminate in its programs and activities, including employment and admissions. In particular, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (20 U.S.C. ss1681) is an all-encompassing federal law that prohibits discrimination based on the sex of students, employees, and third parties when appropriate, of educational institutions which receive federal financial assistance. Sexual harassment of students, which includes acts of sexual violence, is a form of sex discrimination prohibited by Title IX. NWF State College complies with all aspects of this and other federal and state laws regarding non-discrimination.

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.

Anyone with questions about compliance or a complaint regarding harassment or discrimination, including sexual harassment and sexual violence of Title IX, should contact the College's Equal Access/Equal Opportunity Coordinator using the following contact information:

Roberta Mackey, Director of Human Resources
100 College Blvd., Niceville, FL 32578
(850) 729-5365
mackeyr@nwfsc.edu

Structure

The NWF State College 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.



NWF State College Mission Statement

NWF 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 NWF State College 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 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.

Expected Student Outcomes

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

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.

RN to BSN Graduation Requirements

In addition to the program requirements which follow, students must satisfy all college graduation requirements specified in the applicable *NWF State College 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
- 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 NWF State College. 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 NWF State College

Required RN to BSN Courses

Dimensions of Baccalaureate Nursing Practice	3.0
Portfolio I	1.0
Writing for Success	1.0
Health Assessment C	3.0
Clinical Pathophysiology	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
Total	30.0

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, or three 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. The student must hold a current RN License prior to attending clinical experiences.

- Completion of all admission requirements for NWF State College.
- 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” in all Florida Common Course Prerequisites 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 prerequisite courses must be completed by the beginning of the senior year.
- 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 should be satisfied prior to registration.)

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 NWF State College 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 Director of Nursing and the office of Academic Records and Registration will review applications for eligibility. Applicants meeting eligibility requirements will be notified of selection via NWF State College 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 Director of Nursing 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 clinical guided 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 NWF State College. Go to <https://www.nwfsc.edu/students/financialaid/> for more information.

Scholarships

Students may apply for scholarships through the NWF State College 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 a transcript review is completed by NWF State College and before classes begin as time allows. 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). However, due to an extraordinary 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 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 the Florida Nurse Practice Act, and to maintain compliance with the rules and regulations of NWF State College. Failure to comply with these standards may result in dismissal from the RN to BSN program or other appropriate action.

Dress Code

The NWF State College RN to BSN uniform for clinicals is according to the facility requirements, including a NWF State College 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), sweat pants, tank tops, shorts, miniskirts, or open toed shoes are allowed.

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:

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 NWF State College 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.

Smarthinking.com® is a 24/7 online tutorial service available to all NWF State College students. Paper proofing can be accomplished online by Masters and Doctoral prepared professors. Smarthinking.com® provides an online tutoring service for those questions that come up when studying or writing. Each student is limited in the amount 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 - anytime students study!

Students with special needs for which accommodations may be appropriate to assist in pursuing the program should contact the NWF State College Accommodation Resource Center in Building 410 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://www.nwfsc.edu/students/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 NWF 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 NWF State College Director of Nursing. 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. Previous clinical performance
- h. 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. NWF 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.

Course Grades

NWF State College faculty members adhere to the grading practices established and presented in the NWF State College 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. NWF State College RN to BSN program uses letter grades.

NWF 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. 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 Director of Nursing. 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 NWF 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.

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 Director of Nursing or the appropriate department 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. Eligibility criteria and other information about the Course Challenge option is published in the *NWF State College 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 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 Director of Nursing to explore other alternatives before taking such action.

Students must follow appropriate NWF State College procedures when withdrawing from a course. Students who do not follow the required NWF State College 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 at all times. 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 NWF State College 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
- i. Loss of a current clear/active Registered Nursing License
- j. Testing positive for illicit drugs

See the *NWF State College Catalog, Student Handbook* section for additional reasons for dismissal.

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 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 Director of Nursing with faculty member(s); further progression in the program will be contingent upon the approval of by the Director of Nursing and nursing faculty.

General college policies and procedures are published in the *NWF State College 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 NWF State College 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 Director of Nursing 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 Director of Nursing.

Should any concern outside of grading need to be discussed with the Director of Nursing, 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 NWF State College *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 encouraged to contribute to the evaluation in each online course and share 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 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. 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. Periodic conferences will be held to evaluate the student's clinical 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 experiences are required. The faculty will follow the students' progress in the clinical facility either in person or through discussions with the assigned preceptor/facilitator. 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.

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 Clinical

In the event that the student must be absent from clinical, it is the student's responsibility to call the clinical assigned preceptor/facilitator a minimum of one hour prior to the start of clinical; 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.

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 NWF 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 NWF State College students at Smarthinking.com.® and the NWF 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 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 program office.

Liability Insurance

Nursing is a profession in which its members are accountable. Liability insurance coverage beyond that provided by the NWF State College for the clinical 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 NWF State College Fort Walton Beach Campus and on the NWF State College 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

NWF State College 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 NWF 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.

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 NWF State College Office of Academic Records and Registration. 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 NWF State College Office of Academic Records and Registration and the NWF State College Department of Nursing. Currently enrolled students may make changes to address and telephone number online through NWF State College 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.

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.

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. 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

NWF 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 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 Director of Nursing. Should you be unable to meet the program standards, you may be dismissed from the program. You may appeal the dismissal by contacting the NWF State College RN to BSN Director of Nursing.

Substance Use and/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, NWF 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 college. 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.

“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.”

Health Services

Mental Health counseling referrals are available to all NWF State College 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) 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.

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. Students are required to abide by the policies and procedures of the agency in which their clinical experience is scheduled. 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.

Transportation

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

Errors and Incidents in Clinical 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 is defined by the clinical instructor (based on the expertise and knowledge of the instructor and preceptor) 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 preceptor 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.

Student 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 units nor can they be duplicated for any reason. No chart may be reviewed for personal reasons.