



**WESTERN**  
**NEW MEXICO UNIVERSITY**

**STUDENT HANDBOOK FOR THE  
BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN NURSING:  
RN-to-BSN Program**

**Western New Mexico University**

**School of Nursing and Kinesiology (SONAK)**

**Academic Year 2024-2025**

**Reviewed and Revised 08/2024**

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# Nursing Degrees Offered by SONAK

Bachelor of Science in Nursing;

[Pre-Licensure Track](#)

[RN-to-BSN Track](#)

Master of Science in Nursing

[BSN to MSN Track \(traditional\)](#)

RN-to-MSN (two accelerated tracks)

## Student Acknowledgement

Students enrolled in the RN-to-BSN Program at Western New Mexico University (WNMU) are responsible for their knowledge of and adherence to regulations printed within this RN-to-BSN Program Student Handbook.

The School of Nursing reserves the right to modify any provisions or requirements when such an action serves the interest of the patient, the nursing program, and/or its students. Notification of changes will be communicated to students ongoing.

Students will complete an acknowledgement form of receipt found in Appendix A. Please read, sign and be sure to understand the Acknowledgement of Receipt: RN-to-BSN Student Handbook in Appendix A then upload the form to Castle Branch as directed.

## Mission and Vision of the RN-to-BSN Program

### Mission

The mission of the Western New Mexico University School of Nursing RN-to-BSN Program is to promote health and improve quality of life for diverse populations by providing nursing education which instills the values of community, nursing scholarship, practice, and community service.

### Vision

The School of Nursing (SON) prepares Registered Nurses (RNs) as clinicians, educators, and nursing school leaders to serve the local and global community.

*Reviewed by faculty 08/2023*

# University Mission, Vision, and Values

## Mission

An open-access Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) and New Mexico's Applied Liberal Arts and Sciences University, Western New Mexico University combines a foundation of liberal arts education with quality professional programs and career and technical preparation in a diverse, inclusive, creative, and caring community of learners empowered with the essential skills and knowledge for lifelong success in work and life.

*Al ser una Institución al Servicio de Hispanos (HSI) y de inscripción abierta, así como la Universidad de Artes Liberales y Ciencias Aplicadas de Nuevo México, Western New Mexico University combina una base de educación en artes liberales con programas profesionales de calidad y preparación técnica en una comunidad diversa, inclusiva, creativa y solidaria de estudiantes capacitados con habilidades y conocimientos esenciales para el éxito permanente en la vida y el trabajo.*

## Vision

Western New Mexico University is a premier and innovative Applied Liberal Arts and Sciences University in combination with internationally recognized professional programs and career and technical preparation. Its students achieve career goals, become conscientious citizens, practice social and environmental responsibility, and impact their communities and their futures as independent thinkers who know themselves within the changing context of a global, digital world. Embracing its identity as a Hispanic Serving Institution, WNMU is the central contributor in its region for public service, economic development, and cultural enrichment.

*Western New Mexico University es una Universidad de Artes Liberales y Ciencias Aplicadas líder e innovadora que combina programas profesionales reconocidos internacionalmente y la preparación profesional técnica. Sus estudiantes alcanzan metas profesionales, formándolos en ciudadanos comprometidos, que practican la responsabilidad social y ambiental, que tienen impacto en sus comunidades y en su futuro como pensadores críticos independientes que se conocen a sí mismos dentro del contexto cambiante de un mundo global y digital. Adoptando su identidad como una institución al servicio a hispanos, WNMU es la contribuyente central en su región para el servicio público, el desarrollo económico y el enriquecimiento cultural.*

## Core Values

1. Innovation/Creativity: In every obstacle we see opportunities to provide practical solutions to problems, addressing and redefining them to match our institutional strengths. We embrace continuous improvement, encourage invention, and continually seek better, more efficient ways to achieve our goals. We reward creativity and support actions toward positive changes for society.
1. Integrity: We operate ethically, and hold ourselves accountable to our students, the community, and all who serve WNMU's mission. We uphold standards of honesty, confidentiality, trust, respect, and transparency. We recognize that we are individually accountable and collectively responsible for living and encouraging the highest of ethical standards.
2. Intellectual Curiosity: We seek the advancement of knowledge, critical thinking, inquiry, and discovery through our teaching, service, and research. We continuously learn from our achievements and our challenges. We encourage our students and colleagues to challenge each other in the support of academic freedom: inquiry, pursuit of ideas, and creative activity.
3. Personal Responsibility: We recognize our responsibilities to the students, to each other, and to the community. Individually and collectively, we strive to exceed our students' and our colleagues' expectations, achieving teaching and service excellence and creating a welcoming positive learning environment.
4. Service to University and Community: We are good neighbors and a positive force for change. We foster communities of caring, respect, and civility. We engage with our communities, serve society, and build capacity for relating to one another.
5. Student Success: We provide our students with the tools essential to build their futures and succeed in life as productive, educated citizens who can think critically about, adapt to, and change the world around them.

## Program Goals

The graduate of the RN-to-BSN Program will:

1. Pursue a path of lifelong learning which incorporates evidence-based practice, quality improvement initiatives, and integration of advanced technology.
2. Exhibit professionalism through the delivery of expert and culturally responsive care to individuals, families, groups, communities, and populations.
3. Assume leadership roles in the workplace and community settings.

## Program Objectives

Graduate of the RN-to-BSN Program are prepared to:

1. Provide patient-centered care and culturally responsive care to individuals, families, and communities, with an emphasis on wellness, as part of an interdisciplinary team.
2. Assume management/leadership roles in their chosen work settings and communities.
3. Incorporate evidence-based findings into their care and management practices.
4. Role model ethical thinking and behavior, both in and out of the workplace.
5. Participate in workplace and/or community quality improvement initiatives.
6. Communicate effectively, using all available technology.
7. Advocate for policy changes in the workplace, community, state, and country that will address inadequacies and inequalities in health care delivery.
8. Develop therapeutic relationships with clients and families to effect desired health outcomes.
9. Demonstrate lifelong learning as evidenced by continuing education and maintenance of competency.

## Student Learning Outcomes

Graduates of the RN-to-BSN Program will:

1. Be prepared to deliver effective, culturally responsive, and interdisciplinary care within the community, with an emphasis on wellness and therapeutic relationships.
2. Demonstrate commitment to excellence in nursing practice, workplace and community improvement with education and lifelong learning.
3. Role model and promote excellence and ethical practice within nursing while assuming management/leadership roles.
4. Incorporate evidence-based findings into advocacy and clinical practice within the workplace and community.

The Program Objectives and Student Learning Outcomes for the RN-to-BSN Program are based on *The Essentials: Core Competencies for Professional Nursing Education* (AACN, 2021).

5. Domain I: Knowledge for Nursing Practice
6. Domain II: Person-Centered Care
7. Domain III: Population Health
8. Domain IV: Scholarship for Nursing Discipline
9. Domain V: Quality and Safety

10. Domain VI: Interprofessional Partnerships
11. Domain VII: Systems-Based Practice
12. Domain VIII: Informatics and Healthcare Technologies
13. Domain IX: Professionalism
14. Domain X: Personal, Professional and Leadership Development

## School of Nursing Accreditation

Western New Mexico University's accreditation is reaffirmed by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC). The commission is scheduled to conduct its next reaffirmation of accreditation for WNMU in Academic Year (AY) 2024-2025. Please see <https://www.hlcommission.org/Directory-of-HLC-Institutions.html> for additional details.

The baccalaureate tracks in nursing at Western New Mexico University are accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (<https://www.ccneaccreditation.org>), 655 K Street NW, Suite 750, Washington, DC, 20001, Telephone (202) 887-6791.

Western New Mexico School of Nursing and Kinesiology baccalaureate programs are scheduled for reaffirmation of accreditation in 2032. *The Essentials: Core Competencies for Professional Nursing Education* (AACN, 2021) are integrated throughout the BSN program.

## School of Nursing Team

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Associate Dean, School of Nursing (SONAK)<br>Associate Professor  | <i>Dr. Kimberly Petrovic, PhD, MSN, MA, RN</i>  |
| Pre-licensure BSN Program Director<br>Professor                   | <i>Charnelle Lee, MSN-Ed, RN</i>  |
| Professor   | <i>Krista Wood, MSN, RN</i>   |
| Associate Professors  | <i>Margaret “Fran” Driver, MSN, MBA, RN<br/>Jennifer Franz, APRN, MSN-FNP<br/>Erin Wood, MSN, RN</i>  |
| Assistant Professors  | <i>Angela (Angie) Cox, MSN, RN, AHN-BC, HWNC-BC<br/>Ariana Garcia, MSN-Ed, RN, CNC<br/>Brandalyn Hassman, MSN, RN, CNL, CMSRN<br/>Rhea Ann Hazen, PMHNP-BC<br/>Amanda Mondello, MSN, RN</i> |
| Family Nurse Practitioner Program Director<br>Associate Professor | <i>Dr. Kathryn VanRavenstein, PhD, APRN, FNP-BC</i>   |
| RN-to-BSN Program Coordinator<br>Assistant Professor              | <i>Mary McBrayer, MSN-Ed, MAIS, RN</i>  |
| Simulation & Lab Coordinator<br>Assistant Professor               | <i>Lorenzo Saenz, MSN, RN</i>   |
| Adjunct Faculty   | <i>Brittany Parks, FNP-C<br/>Amber Rose King, MSH, APRN, C-PNP-C<br/>Amanda Winter, FNP-C</i>   |
| Senior Program Manager  | <i>Socorro Rico, BS</i>   |
| Nurse Coaches   | <i>Dr. Dahlia Rojas, PhD, RN, Nurse Coach – Board Certified<br/>Jennifer Novitski, MSN</i>  |
| Nursing Advisor   | <i>Sandra “Serene” Vannoy, BA</i>   |
| Administrative Assistant  | <i>Juan Carlos Quesada</i>  |
| Simulation Technician Analyst                                     | <i>Marlene Holman, CHSOS</i>  |

# RN-to-BSN Program Admission Requirements

## RN-to-BSN Program Description

Western New Mexico University offers an RN-to-BSN completion program. This RN-to-BSN Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) program at WNMU is divided into either eight (8)-or 16-week sessions depending on the course. Detailed information for core courses is offered in Table 1. Holidays and breaks follow the regular WNMU academic calendar. Students can enter the program during Fall, Spring or Summer semester. All nursing courses are completed online. There are service-learning components in several of the classes and a practicum component in NUR 481 - Community Health Nursing, which can be completed in the community where the student lives. Recommended course load for students employed full-time is six (6) hours or less. Students who are employed full-time and are considering taking a course load greater than the recommended six (6) credits must obtain faculty approval. [Information for the RN-to-BSN track can also be found online.](#)

Graduates of the BSN program will be prepared for positions in patient care, leadership, school health, and community health (no minor required). The RN-to-BSN program also offers a step-up option to the Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) Program through WNMU, where students can opt to apply for WNMU Graduate Division and the MSN Program after the completion of pre-requisite courses through the RN-to-BSN Program, and contingent upon meeting the criteria for WNMU Graduate Division and the MSN Program.

## Plan of Study

Students may enroll in the RN-to-BSN program during Fall, Spring, and Summer semesters. For course rotation planning, please visit the link <http://sonak.wnmu.edu>

## RN-to-BSN Program Admission Requirements

- Graduate of an approved Associate Degree of Nursing (ADN) or Diploma Program in nursing.
- Valid, unencumbered, active license as a Registered Nurse (RN) in the United States (U.S.).
- Cumulative G.P.A. of 2.75 or higher.
- Students enrolled in Community Health (NUR 447 & 481) must ensure the following are currently documents in the student file for the duration of the course:
  - Immunity to rubella
  - If born after 1956, proof of rubeola immunity

- Current evidence of a negative tuberculosis (TB) test (skin) or negative chest X-ray
- Professional liability insurance
- Current CPR/BLS certification
- Blood Borne Pathogen certification
- Hepatitis B, annual influenza, and current Covid-19 immunization are encouraged
- Facility requirements during practicum will also need to be met; these requirements will vary

### Active RN License

Students will maintain an active, unencumbered RN license in the United States. Students will complete the acknowledgment form in Appendix A and upload it to CastleBranch.

## RN-to-BSN Coursework Requirements

### Transfer Credit

- Graduates of ADN programs can transfer lower division credits to WNMU.
- Credit earned in a diploma program will be evaluated on an individual basis.
- Only college courses with a grade of “C” or better will transfer.
- There is no time limit on how long ago the ADN or Diploma Program was completed.
- WNMU resident credit policies require that a minimum amount of coursework must be taken through WNMU to satisfy the resident credit requirement.

### Transfer Student Policy

Students applying to transfer to the RN-to-BSN Program at Western New Mexico University from another academic program must be admitted to the University and submit official transcripts from the college/university they attended to the admissions office.

Transfer credit will be granted after a review of transcripts by the Admissions Officer. A grade of “C” or better is required for transfer of credit.

Students wishing to transfer may be asked to submit a catalog or course description in effect at the time the course was taken as a condition to receiving transfer credit for such coursework. Students requesting transfer credit for nursing courses must have attended a state board of nursing approved school of nursing or an accredited college/university. Any student wishing to transfer to WNMU should review the academic regulations regarding transfer credit in the [University catalog](#).

## General Education Requirements and Supporting Coursework for the RN-to-BSN Degree

- WNMU General Education Requirements – Applicants should refer to the current WNMU Catalog. General Education Supporting Coursework Credits are based on the year of entry and must comply with University guidelines.
- MATH 1350 – Introduction to Statistics \***

## Degree Requirements

- A minimum of 42 credit hours of upper division courses are required. Please review the current WNMU catalog for course descriptions and pre-requisites. Nine (9) credit hours must come from Writing Intensive (WI) courses, and three (3) credits must be designated as Service Learning\*. **Highlighted courses** are designated as pre-requisite courses for the RN-to-MSN track.

## RN-to-BSN Core Courses

The following courses are offered in 16 and eight (8) week formats, as outlined in Table 1. Please contact the School of Nursing advisor for your individualized degree plan.

Table 1

### RN-to-BSN Course Offerings

| Course Number  | Course Name                               | Credit Hours | Offered Semester          | Lengths in Weeks |
|----------------|---|--------------|---------------------------|------------------|
| NUR 325        | Health Assessment                         | 3            | Spring                    | 8                |
| NUR 332        | Nursing Research                          | 3            | Fall                      | 8                |
| NUR 336        | Pathophysiology for Nurses                | 3            | Spring/Summer/Fall        | 8                |
| <b>NUR 401</b> | <b>Gerontological Nursing</b>             | <b>3</b>     | <b>Fall</b>               | <b>16</b>        |
| NUR 406        | Critical Thinking in Professional Nursing | 3            | Fall/Spring               | 8                |
| NUR 407        | Leadership Roles                          | 3            | Fall                      | 8                |
| NUR 408        | Issues in Professional Nursing *          | 3            | Spring/Summer/Fall        | 8                |
| NUR 415        | Health Policy                             | 3            | Spring                    | 8                |
| NUR 429        | Utilizing Resources                       | 3            | Spring/Summer/Fall        | <b>8</b>         |
| <b>NUR 432</b> | <b>Nursing Informatics</b>                | <b>3</b>     | <b>Spring/Summer/Fall</b> | <b>8</b>         |
| NUR 447        | Community Health Theory **                | 3            | Fall/Spring               | 16               |
| NUR 481        | Community Health Practicum **             | 3            | Fall/Spring               | 16               |
|                | Nursing elective (see Table 2)            | 2-3          | Varies                    | Varies           |

\* NUR 408 Issues in Professional Nursing is the service-learning component required for all baccalaureate degrees through WNMU

\*\* NUR 447 Community Health Theory and NUR 481 Community Health Practicum require instructor approval

## RN-to-MSN Track

The RN-to-MSN track is an option for working nurses to participate in an accelerated MSN Program without a baccalaureate degree in nursing.

1. The applicant on this track will enroll in the RN-to-BSN program as an undergraduate student while completing the pre-requisite courses (highlighted above).
2. During the last semester of pre-requisite courses, the applicant will apply to the [WNMU Graduate Division](#) **and** the [MSN Program](#).
3. Admission to the Graduate Division and the MSN are contingent on the applicant fulfilling requirements for both Graduate division and program admissions. There are three MSN tracks:
  - a. The [traditional track](#) for those with a BSN.
  - b. Non-traditional track I: RN with a baccalaureate degree in another concentration (highlighted pre-requisite courses are required)
  - c. Non-traditional track II: RN with no baccalaureate degree (highlighted pre-requisite courses are required)

If the student opts for a non-traditional (I or II) RN-to-MSN track, they will receive an RN-to-BSN degree plan while completing pre-requisite courses as an undergraduate student. Upon admission to the Graduate Division and the MSN Program, the student will receive an MSN degree plan and complete courses as a graduate student.

Successful completion requirements for MSN courses are outlined in the MSN Student Handbook. Should the student not wish to continue in the MSN Program for academic or personal reasons, they can come back to the RN-to-BSN Program and complete that degree plan.

Students who opt for a non-traditional (I or II) track should expect to work closely with the School of Nursing Faculty and advisor(s) for successful preparation for the MSN Program.

# RN-to-BSN Course Descriptions

## Course Descriptions

### **NUR 325 Health Assessment (3 credit hours)**

Holistic assessment techniques for clients of all ages; includes interviewing techniques to obtain history and cultural beliefs and preferences, and physical exam techniques; emphasis is on identification of abnormal findings and accurate documentation.

Prerequisite: ENGL 1120 and Admission to the RN to B.S.N. program

Writing Intensive Writing Intensive.

Level of Study: UG

### **NUR 332 Nursing Research (3 credit hours)**

Introduction to concepts and issues in nursing research. Emphasis in this course is on the research process, research designs, reading and critiquing research, and research utilization.

Prerequisite: ENGL 1120, MATH 1350, and Admission to the RN to B.S.N. program

Writing Intensive Writing Intensive.

Level of Study: UG

### **NUR 336 Pathophysiology for Nurses (3 credit hours)**

The study of complex human disease processes, along with appropriate nursing assessments and care strategies.

Prerequisite: BIOL 2225/BIOL 2225L, ENGL 1120, and Admission to the RN to B.S.N. program

Level of Study: UG

### **NUR 401 Gerontological Nursing (3 credit hours)**

The focus of the course is healthy aging. Includes advanced nursing assessment, and use of evidence-based practice for prevention of common problems associated with aging for acute and end-of-life care, and for optimizing health for those living with chronic health problems. Common legal and ethical issues of the aging person are reviewed.

Prerequisite: ENGL 1120, NUR 332, NUR 325, and Admission to the RN to B.S.N. program

Writing Intensive Writing Intensive.

Level of Study: UG

### **NUR 406 Critical Thinking in Professional Nursing (3 credit hours)**

Strategies designed to enhance critical thinking and analysis skills of the professional nurse. The student will explore the relationship between theory, clinical judgement, and caring.

Prerequisite: ENGL 1120 and Admission to RN to B.S.N. program

Writing Intensive Writing Intensive.

Level of Study: UG

### **NUR 407 Leadership Roles (3 credit hours)**

Organization, management, leadership, and change as they relate to health care systems/settings at the unit level. Emphasis on the growth of the professional role as manager of care; includes the critical examination into management and leadership roles, collaboration, impact of culture on institutional structure, development of teams and interdisciplinary approaches to care, budgeting and finance role development, change process and development of a professional philosophy, in addition to the ethical issues in management.

Prerequisite: ENGL 1120 and Admission to RN to B.S.N. program

Writing Intensive Writing Intensive.

Level of Study: UG

### **NUR 408 Issues in Professional Nursing (3 credit hours)**

Theoretical presentations of issues and trends that impact the community and nursing profession. Nursing theory is applied to current nursing practice and service to student-selected community outside of nursing specialty. Emphasis placed on professional growth through service. Final project presents student engagement in community service project. (Service-Learning component).

Prerequisite: ENGL 1120 and Admission to RN to B.S.N. program

Level of Study: UG

### **NUR 415 Health Policy (3 credit hours)**

Evaluation of power, politics, and health policy; exploration of professional nursing roles in health policy development. Includes an advocacy component.

Prerequisite: ENGL 1120 and Admission to RN to B.S.N. program

Level of Study: UG

### **NUR 429 Utilizing Resources (3 credit hours)**

Builds an academic and technical skill foundation for RN students who will be completing their B.S.N. course work at a distance using online platforms. Emphasis on the development of a learning community that supports and facilitates the participation of all the members of the course. Introduction to critical thinking, effective written discussions (WEB), and access to library/data resources as they apply to changing nursing practice. Prerequisite: ENGL 1120 and Admission to the RN to B.S.N. program  
Level of Study: UG

### **NUR 432 Nursing Informatics (3 credit hours)**

Use of information management and computers in a variety of health care applications, including hospital information systems and patient record systems. The internet will be discussed as a source of health care information.

Prerequisite: ENGL 1120 and Admission to the RN to B.S.N. program

Level of Study: UG

### **NUR 447 Community Health Theory (3 credit hours)**

Theoretical study of nursing care for communities and vulnerable populations. Covers principles of epidemiology, public health, environmental health, grant writing and community nursing roles.

Prerequisite: ENGL 1120 and Admission to the RN to B.S.N. program

Writing Intensive Writing Intensive.

Level of Study: UG

### **NUR 481 Community Health Practicum (3 credit hours)**

Clinical practicum (96 hours) supporting the study of nursing care for communities and vulnerable populations. Focuses on public health principles, performance of a community needs assessment and completion of a capstone project that addresses vulnerability of a specific population.

Prerequisite: RN Licensure, Liability Insurance, ENGL 1120, and Admission to the RN to B.S.N. program

Level of Study: UG

## Nursing Elective Options

Table 2

### *Suggested Nursing Elective Courses*

| Course Number | Course Title                            | Credit Hours |
|---------------|---|--------------|
| CHDP 2110     | Introduction to Addiction               | 3            |
| CHDP 304      | Helping Skills in Chemical Dependency   | 3            |
| CHDP 305      | Chemical Dependency and Family          | 3            |
| CJUS 322      | Substance Abuse and Crime               | 3            |
| CJUS 347      | Response to Terrorism/Natural Disasters | 3            |
| CJUS 367      | Women and Crime                         | 3            |
| CJUS/SWK 413  | Human Trafficking                       | 3            |
| COMM 400      | Cross-Cultural Communications           | 3            |
| HLTH 470      | Human Sexuality                         | 3            |
| KINS 300      | Nutrition                               | 3            |
| PSYC 2120     | Developmental Psychology                | 3            |
| PSY/SOC 406   | Social Psychology                       | 3            |
| PSY 411       | Health Psychology                       | 3            |
| PSY 425       | Theories of Personality                 | 3            |
| PSY 435       | Human Motivation                        | 3            |
| PSY 440       | Interpersonal Psychology                | 3            |
| PSY 441       | Cultural Psychology                     | 3            |
| PSY 445       | Psychology of Sports/Exercise           | 3            |
| PSY 447       | Psychology of Prejudice                 | 3            |
| SOC 313       | Social Inequality                       | 3            |
| SOC 352       | Sociology of Gender                     | 3            |
| SWK 342       | Human Behavior in a Social Environment  | 3            |

*Note: This table is a list of suggestions for nursing elective courses. Most of these courses are offered online. Not all courses are taught every semester. Please contact the School of Nursing advisor to seek substitution/approval for a different course.*

## Retention and Progression

Retention in the RN-to-BSN program requires that students receive a minimum grade of “C” (70.0%) in all courses. This is also applicable to the pre-requisite courses for the RN-to-MSN track. Once enrolled in the MSN program, a minimum of a “B” (80.0%) is required for all coursework. Students must assume responsibility for monitoring their own progress throughout the semester. If the student is having difficulty, it is their responsibility to seek help from the nursing faculty and/or advisor. Students must receive a passing grade in the practicum regardless of the didactic grade to continue in the program. The criteria for passing practicum components are included in the evaluation tool for each nursing course. Students will be evaluated mid-course and again just prior to completion of the course. If a student fails an 8-week course taken the first half of the semester, the student may continue for the remainder of the semester in whatever other courses they are presently enrolled in. Then with the following semester they MUST retake and pass the failed course before being allowed to continue in the program. A student who has failed two courses (either different or the same course) will be ineligible to progress within the RN-to-BSN program for one calendar year. After one calendar year, students may reapply to the program.

## Responsibilities of the Student

- Students are required to pay all tuition and fees when they are due. Students having difficulty meeting this obligation to the University must contact the WNMU Financial Aid Office.
- Students should check announcements and campus e-mail frequently (i.e., daily).
- Students requiring any accommodation should contact [WNMU Wellness and Accessibility Services Office](#). The email address is [accessibility@WNMU.edu](mailto:accessibility@WNMU.edu)
- Students in the RN-to-BSN Program are expected to purchase and maintain individual malpractice insurance. This is also required in the RN-to-MSN track and the MSN Program.
- Students are responsible for their own transportation and lodging for any out-of-town clinical rotations, practicum experiences, field trips or service learning/volunteer activities.
- As the nursing courses are online, it is the responsibility of the student to familiarize themselves with all aspects of the online courses.
  - Students need to post assignments in the appropriate places, check and reply to discussion board posts, and engage in all assignments and content as outlined in each class syllabus and learning management system (LMS).

- Students are responsible for knowing and following the course timeline, including all assignment and exam due dates.
- If a student is not clear about the use of the online learning management system, the student should contact [WNMU Information Technology](#) to schedule tutoring and assistance in navigating the LMS.
- Students must follow time guidelines for all assignments and be on time for all clinical placements. Persistent tardiness/absences/failure to meet assignment due dates and other deadlines constitutes grounds for course failure.

## Learning Management System

The School of Nursing utilizes Canvas, an internet-based learning management platform. This learning management system (LMS) allows students to submit assignments, take exams, view grades, discuss course readings and topics, among other course-related activities. Students access Canvas from their WNMU account.

## Digital Literacy Skills

Students will need digital literacy skills to complete assignments in the RN-to-BSN Program courses. These include:

- Use of online course libraries and databases to locate and gather appropriate information.
- Use of computer networks to locate and store files or data.
- Use of online search tools for specific academic purposes (search criteria, keywords, filtering options).
- Proper citation of information sources.
- Preparation and presentation of research findings.

## Course Syllabi

All RN-to-BSN course syllabi are posted at the beginning of the semester as part of the Canvas course shell for each course. Students are responsible for accessing the course and reviewing the syllabus. If the student does not understand the syllabus and/or has questions about the course, then the student should plan to talk with the course instructor for more information to gain clarity.

## Academic Integrity and Code of Civility (Conduct)

Western New Mexico University policies on Academic Integrity and Student Code of Conduct specified in the [WNMU Catalog](#) and [WNMU Student Handbook](#) apply to students enrolled in any program offered by the School of Nursing and Kinesiology. Students are expected to abide by these policies and by all policies and procedures established by WNMU.

### Utilization of Artificial Intelligence (AI) software and platforms (Credit to Professor Jost, WNMU)

Artificial Intelligence (AI) resources can be useful and powerful tools in the educational experience. As an institute of higher learning, WNMU also promotes expectations for the development of human skills and learning. For each WNMU course, the instructor will establish guidelines and rules for the use of AI based resources, including whether their use is permitted at all. To satisfy University standards of academic integrity, students must read and adhere to the specific AI usage policies and guidelines that have been established for each course by its instructor. This information will be in each course syllabus.

## Course Work

### Online Exams

Failure to complete online exams during the time-period allotted will result in a grade of zero for that exam. Exceptions will be made, and a make-up exam offered, if the student has a reasonable excuse for not taking the exam during the regular time period and has contacted the instructor in a timely manner, prior to the exam.

### Assignments and Due Dates

Assignments are due by the dates specified in the assignment schedule. All assignments/discussions are due in Mountain Time (MST). Late assignments will have five points deducted for each day that the assignment is late, including weekends, for a total of three days. After that, if an assignment is still not turned in, a "0" will be recorded. A student who anticipates an assignment will be late may ask the instructor via email for an extension before the assignment's due date. Preferred method of contact will be listed by the instructor in each course syllabus (i.e., Canvas, Outlook etc.) The extension may or may not be granted at the discretion of the faculty. If an extension is granted, a new due date will be given to the student for the assignment.

## Incomplete Grade

The RN-to-BSN Program follows the University's Incomplete Grade procedure as outlined in Academic Regulations in the WNMU Course Catalog. It is the responsibility of the student to contact faculty to request a grade of "I" and develop a plan to complete coursework by the end of the following semester. In no case will a grade of "I" be used to avoid the assigning of D or F grades for marginal or failing work.

## Service Learning

Service Learning at WNMU engages students in structured community service activities and guided reflection as a part of the academic curriculum. Service learning gives students real-world experiences to enhance learning while helping to address community needs and foster civic engagement through volunteerism.

The components of service learning at WNMU are:

- Intentional and meaningful connections to curriculum.
- Student reflection through thinking, talking, and writing about experiences.
- Building and sustaining community partnerships.

Assessment is used to ensure that learning outcomes and contributions to the community are meaningful. Students are expected to follow service-learning guidelines as stated in the course syllabus.

## Scope of Practice

The WNMU School of Nursing recognizes that students from all over the United States can apply to the RN-to-BSN Program through WNMU. The RN-to-BSN Program has the expectation that all enrolled students adhere to their state Nurse Practice Act, which can be found [here](#) (NCSBN, n.d.) In addition, licensed nurses are expected to utilize the American Nurses Association *Code of Ethics* (2015) (Table 3) and the American Nurses Association professional *Nursing Scope and Standards of Practice* (2021) (Table 4) as guidelines for safe and ethical practice

Table 3

*Provisions of the Code of Ethics for Nurses with Interpretive Statements*

| Provision   | Description  |
|-------------|--|
| Provision 1 | The nurse practices with compassion and respect for the inherent dignity, worth and unique attributes of every person.   |
| Provision 2 | The nurse’s primary commitment is to the patient, whether an individual, family, group, community, or population.  |
| Provision 3 | The nurse promotes, advocates for, and protects the rights, health, and safety of the patient.   |
| Provision 4 | The nurse has authority, accountability, and responsibility for nursing practice; makes decisions, and takes action consistent with the obligation to promote health and to provide optimal care.                                |
| Provision 5 | The nurse owes the same duty to self as to others, including the responsibility to promote health and safety, preserve wholeness of character and integrity, maintain competence, and continue personal and professional growth. |
| Provision 6 | The nurse, through individual and collective effort, establishes, maintains, and improves ethical environment of work setting and conditions of employment that are conducive to safe, quality healthcare.                       |
| Provision 7 | The nurse, in all roles and settings, advances the profession through research and scholarly inquiry, professional standards development, and the generation of both nursing and health policy.                                  |
| Provision 8 | The nurse collaborates with other health professionals and the public to protect human rights, promote health diplomacy, and reduce health disparities.  |
| Provision 9 | The profession of nursing, collectively through its professional organizations, must articulate nursing values, maintain the integrity of the profession, and integrate principles of social justice into nursing health policy. |

Table 4

*ANA Standards of Professional Nursing Practice*

| Standard  | Description  |
|---|--|
| Standard 1: Assessment                            | The registered nurse collects pertinent data and information relative to healthcare consumer's health or information.    |
| Standard 2: Diagnosis                             | The registered nurse analyzes assessment data to determine actual or potential diagnosis, problems, and issues.          |
| Standard 3: Outcomes Identification               | The registered nurse identifies expected outcomes for a plan individualized to the healthcare consumer or the situation. |
| Standard 4: Planning                              | The registered nurse develops a collaborative plan encompassing strategies to achieve expected outcomes.                 |
| Standard 5: Implementation                        | The registered nurse implements the identified plan.   |
| Standard 5a: Coordination of Care                 | The registered nurse coordinates care delivery.  |
| Standard 5b: Health Teaching and Health Promotion | The registered nurse employs strategies to teach and promote health and wellness.  |
| Standard 6: Evaluation                            | The registered nurse evaluates progress toward attainment of goals and outcomes.   |

# Essential Eligibility Requirements

**Table 5**

*Essential Eligibility Requirements for Participation in the School of Nursing*

| <b>ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS</b>   | <b>SOME EXAMPLES OF NECESSARY ACTIVITIES</b>  |
|--|---|
| Critical thinking abilities sufficient for clinical judgment   | Identify cause/effect relationships in clinical situations; develop nursing care plans.   |
| Interpersonal abilities sufficient to interact with individuals, families, and groups from a variety of social, emotional, cultural, and intellectual backgrounds. | Establish rapport with patients/families and colleagues.  |
| Communication abilities sufficient for interactions with others in verbal and written form.  | Explain treatment procedures, initiate health teaching, document and interpret nursing actions and patient/client responses.          |
| Abilities sufficient for observation and assessment necessary in nursing care.   | Observe patient/client responses.   |
| Abilities sufficient to monitor and assess health needs.   | Hear monitor alarms, emergency signals, auscultate sounds, and cries for help.  |
| Abilities sufficient to move from room to room and to maneuver in small places.  | Move around in patients' rooms, workspaces, and treatment areas, and administer cardio-pulmonary resuscitation.                       |
| Abilities sufficient for physical assessment.  | Perform palpation, functions of physical examination and/or those related to therapeutic intervention, e.g., insertion of a catheter. |
| Abilities sufficient to provide safe and effective nursing care.   | Calibrate and use equipment, position patients/clients. Safely lift and move clients/patients.  |

## Student Accessibility Information

Services for student accommodations are provided through the Wellness and Accessibility Services office in the Global Resources Center. Services may vary depending on the needs.

Mailing Address:

Wellness and Accessibility Services Coordinator

P.O. Box 680

Silver City, NM 88062

Telephone Number: 575-538- 6277

Email: [accessibility@wnmu.edu](mailto:accessibility@wnmu.edu)

Website: [Wellness and Accessibility Services - Center for Student Success \(wnmu.edu\)](http://www.wnmu.edu/center-for-student-success)

Students are asked to notify the Wellness and Accessibility Services office as soon as possible to discuss accommodation concerns and needs. Testing accommodations are provided when approved through Wellness and Accessibility Services. Faculty are not expected to lower their academic standards using accommodations available. Students should be able to demonstrate their knowledge without the need for alternative tests or different evaluation/grading standards. Accommodation letters state the appropriate testing accommodations, depending on the coursework and the student's accommodation needs.

## Attendance

Attendance is important and is tracked in online courses within the LMS. Absences from arranged practicum hours require that the community agency/preceptor be notified at least one hour before the absence. Any missed practicum hours must be rescheduled with the community preceptor.

## Professional Appearance for In-Person Learning Experiences

Professional dress is expected for all community experiences during the RN-to-BSN program. Check with the community practicum leader, service-learning agency, and/or faculty for expectations regarding dress code.

## Student Success Plan

Students who are unable to meet course deadlines, consistently do not submit work that receives a “C” or higher, or who are unable to meet any other course/clinical/practicum/service-learning requirements as outlined in the RN-to-BSN Student Handbook or course syllabi have the opportunity to meet with faculty to create a remediation plan in the form of a Student Success Plan (Appendix C). The Student Success

Plan is a collaborative effort on the part of the student, faculty, and any other resource the student agrees to utilize (i.e., a Nurse Coach) to resolve the issue prior to withdrawing from or failing a course. The student can request a Student Success Plan at any time during the semester. The faculty may suggest a Student Success Plan to the student, but the student is not obligated to participate.

## Nurse Coaching

WNMU School of Nursing utilizes a holistic success model for all enrolled nursing students. One resource, free to students enrolled in a School of Nursing Program, are the services of one of our certified Nurse Coaches. To access this resource, the student may directly contact a Nurse Coach. Faculty, with student consent, may refer students to a Nurse Coach.

## Student Health

[Student Health Services](#) for all WNMU students are provided by Hidalgo Medical Services (HMS), although coverage is [limited to areas where HMS is located](#). Explanation of coverage is found on the [WNMU Coverage website](#).

## Student Clinical Error Policy

The faculty recognizes that no student will intentionally make an error when providing patient care. They also realize that students are human and that mistakes can and do occur.

To ensure client safety and because of an increasingly litigious society, the faculty has determined that to protect the patient, the student, and to verify that the student is a safe practitioner, the following procedures will be followed if a clinical error occurs.

When a student or licensed personnel recognizes that an error has been made, it is the student's responsibility to report the error immediately to the BSN nursing faculty, community agency and to follow liability insurance and community agency protocol. An incident/clinical occurrence report will be filled out and filed with WNMU School of Nursing, and the community agency according to agency policy. See Appendix B for the clinical occurrence form.

Failure to complete the steps outlined within 10 class days will result in suspension of the student from the community setting and may result in dismissal from the program.

## Needle Stick Policy

Students sustaining a needle stick injury and/or percutaneous or mucous membrane exposure to blood and bodily fluid should:

- Report the incident to the infection control nurse at the facility and follow facility policy/protocol.
- Report the incident to the faculty as soon as possible/safe to do so.
- Complete an Incident Report form for the facility and WNMU School of Nursing.

Click here to enter text. Click here to enter text. Click here to enter text. Click here to enter text. Click here to enter text. Click here to enter text. Click here to enter text. Click here to enter text. Click here to enter text. Click here to enter text. HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) Evaluation and management of exposure will follow the latest CDC guidelines for exposures.

## Code of Civility (Conduct)

To promote a positive, professional atmosphere among students, faculty, and staff, the following Code of Civility has been developed:

**Respect:** Treat all students, faculty, staff, and property with respect and in a courteous and professional manner. This includes all communications, whether verbal or written. Let your actions reflect pride in yourself, your university, and your profession.

**Kindness:** A kind word and gentle voice go a long way. Refrain from using profanity, insulting slang remarks, or making disparaging comments. Consider another person's feelings. Be nice.

**Truth:** Exhibit honesty and integrity in your dealings with fellow students, faculty, and staff members. Do not lie, do not cheat, and do not steal.

**Responsibility:** Take responsibility for your actions. This includes gracefully accepting the consequences of your behavior.

**Cooperation:** Exhibit a cooperative manner when dealing with students, faculty, and staff so we may all work towards our common goals and mission.

**Acceptance:** Accept differences in others, as they accept differences in you. This includes diversity in opinions, beliefs, ideas, and everything else that makes us unique individuals.

**Professionalism:** Always conduct yourself in a manner that will bring pride to your profession, to the School of Nursing, to Western New Mexico University, and most importantly, to yourself.

## Social Networking Policy

The American Nurses Association (ANA) *Code of Ethics with Interpretive Statements* (2021) defines social media as any form of “electronic communication such as web sites for social networking and blogging where users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages, and other content (p. 46).” Anyone using these social networking sites should become familiar with the concepts of [defamation](#) and invasion of privacy ([ANA, 2021](#)), Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act ([HIPAA](#)) (USDHHS, 2023; CMS, 2023), and Family Education Rights and Privacy Act ([FERPA](#)) (USDE, 2022). Provision Three (3) of the *ANA Code of Ethics with Interpretive Statements* (2021) requires the nurse to promote, advocate for and protect the rights, health, and safety of the patient. Interpretive statement 3.1 clearly outlines the nurse’s responsibilities toward protection of the rights of privacy and confidentiality (pp. 9-10). Individuals or groups within the school community are not permitted to present personal opinions in ways that imply endorsement by the School of Nursing or WNMU.

## Discrimination and Harassment

To report a violation of the Policy of Discrimination and Harassment, please refer to the Office of Civil Rights and Title IX.

Mailing Address:

Office of Civil Rights and Title IX

P.O. Box 680

Silver City, New Mexico 88062

Telephone Number: 575-538-6025

Website: <http://titleix.wnmu.edu>

## Assignment Guidelines

All assignments will be submitted electronically through Canvas LMS unless notified by faculty of alternative submission requirements. TurnItIn<sup>®</sup> is utilized to help detect problems related to improper or missing citations, duplicate submissions throughout the country, plagiarism, and other issues involving the quality of assigned written work. Faculty will utilize TurnItIn<sup>®</sup> to “flag” written assignments requiring further scrutiny and to review for the issues identified above.

Nursing students should use the most current edition of the *American Psychological Association (APA) Publication Manual* (2020) as guidelines for all written work, unless

specified in the guidelines for the assignment. For tutorials and other APA resources, please visit <https://apastyle.apa.org/>

## Grading Scale

WNMU's RN-to-BSN Program uses the following grading scale to assess and assign course grades:

Table 5

### *RN-to-BSN Grading Scale*

| Letter Grade | Point Scale |
|--------------|-------------|
| A            | 90.0-100.0  |
| B            | 80.0-89.9   |
| C            | 70.0-79.9   |
| D            | 60.0-69.9   |
| F            | 0.00-59.9   |

Click here to enter text. Click here to enter text. Click here to enter text. Click here to enter text. Click here to enter text. Again, it is necessary to obtain a grade of "C" (minimum 70.0%) or better to remain in all core and supporting courses, maintain progress and remain in the RN-to-BSN program. The School of Nursing will not round up any score.

## Extra Credit Policies

The WNMU School of Nursing does not allow extra credit assignments within courses. Students who encounter difficulties with course material should contact faculty as soon as such difficulties surface within a course. ***There will be no extra credit opportunities to allow students who are unsuccessful in course assignments and/or exams to achieve passing scores.***

## Exam Policies

Exams must be taken at scheduled times. Students must notify the instructor prior to the exam time. If unable to take the exam at the designated time. Failure to notify faculty will earn the student a grade of zero, with no option of a make-up exam. Missed exams must be re-scheduled with course faculty within 24 hours and taken within one week of the original day/exam time. Students will be allowed to make up a maximum of two exams in different

courses per semester (one exam per course if the student is taking more than one course per semester) if faculty receives notification prior to the missed exam. Additional exams missed after the student has completed two different make-up exams shall receive a score of zero (0).

## Participation in Governance

Students are encouraged to participate in governance activities related to their nursing program. To that end, faculty meeting agendas include student representative participation in bringing student concerns forward to faculty and taking program information back to their fellow students. Students will be excused from faculty meetings when discussion items are confidential or not appropriate for student participation.

## Communications Policy Statement

As with all practices in the School of Nursing, students, faculty, and staff are expected to conduct themselves ethically and professionally. This includes professionalism with respect to all written and verbal communication, regardless of its purpose. When sending written communication, the use of correct grammar, spelling and punctuation, appropriate professional titles, and generally accepted professional etiquette is essential to maintain a professional atmosphere conducive to a positive working and learning environment. For telephone communication, professionalism is also required, including identifying information and a return contact number as part of any voicemail message. Parties who do not leave a voicemail message with identifying information and/or contact information should not expect their call to be returned.

Program faculty and staff strive to respond to student email and telephone communication in a timely manner and are allotted up to two (2) business days to respond to communications. Please note that this timeline may be adjusted due to a variety of conditions such as holiday or break schedules, timing (during finals week or the first week of classes, for instance), workload, or other factors, so patience is appreciated. If urgent attention is required, students should follow up on initial communication with a second follow-up communication. After the second follow-up, students should contact the School of Nursing main line (575) 538-6960 or the department's main email at the [School of Nursing website](#) for support in reaching the party they are trying to contact.

***WNMU policies require that all official communication be sent via Mustang Express/WNMU e-mail addresses.*** As a result, all emails related to enrollment at WNMU,

and class communication (including changes in assignments and grades) will be sent to wnmw.edu email addresses. It is especially important that students access their WNMU email daily to check for correspondence from the University. If students prefer to receive their email at a different address, they are expected to forward their messages from Mustang Express to the other address.

### Forwarding WNMU Email

1. Log on to Mustang Express.
2. Click on the purple MAIL icon.
3. When this opens, click on the tool icon on the top right of the screen.
4. Scroll down to Your App Settings and click on Mail Communications Policy Statement Regarding Official Email (cont.)
5. On the left of the screen, scroll down to Accounts and click on Forwarding.
6. Enter the preferred email address.

## RN-to-BSN Program Dismissal

### [Click here to enter text.](#) Undergraduate Licensed Nursing Student Suspected of Impairment in Class or Clinical Setting

Impairment is the inability or impending inability to deliver safe, professional care because of a behavioral, mental, or physical condition associated with drugs or alcohol (Toney-Butler & Siela, 2022). Impairment occurs when care providers, such as nurses, cannot provide safe and competent care because of any mind-altering substances. Due to these conditions, nurses cannot perform their professional responsibilities and duties consistent with nursing standards (Lengel, 2023).

Although WNMU maintains and enforces policies regarding substance and alcohol use, the special needs of the School of Nursing programs require additional procedures for handling the suspected drug/alcohol impairment of students enrolled in nursing coursework. Due to the nature of the course of study, students enrolled in nursing courses must not be under the influence of any substance (regardless of whether the use of the substance is legal or illegal, prescription or otherwise), which impairs or is likely to impair the student's clinical judgment while in the classroom, clinical practicum, or laboratory setting.

## Purpose

This policy aims to provide guidelines for identifying and addressing student impairment among degree clinical students enrolled in the School of Nursing. Student impairment, which includes physical, psychological, or substance-related issues affecting a student's ability to fulfill academic and professional responsibilities, will be addressed with sensitivity, fairness, and a commitment to student well-being.

This policy demonstrates the School of Nursing's commitment to safeguard the health of the students and the public and provides a safe place for students to learn.

Drug or alcohol use, either on-campus or in a classroom, clinical practicum, or laboratory setting, can seriously endanger the safety of patients and students and make it impossible to provide safe healthcare and service. Impairment or potential impairment of judgment in the clinical, practical or laboratory setting places the safety of students, patients, clinical staff, faculty, and the public at unacceptable risk. This policy:

- Provides clear recommendations and consistent procedures for handling incidents of student under the influence of alcohol, drugs, or controlled substances that affect or are likely to affect judgment in the classroom, clinical, practical, or laboratory setting.
- Informs students of their responsibility to conform to all state and federal laws and regulations and WNMU policies, rules, and regulations regarding alcohol, drugs, or controlled substances.
- Provides recommendations regarding student impairment for all nursing faculty regarding problem recognition and implementation of this policy.
- Balances the need to safeguard the public with that of recognizing the rights of the student.

## Student Impairment

WNMU SONAK recommends the following:

- Students who appear to be impaired or under the influence of drugs or alcohol while engaged in public contact related to coursework be asked to submit to drug or alcohol tests at their own expense.
- WNMU recognizes that facility policies differ and recommends that the preceptor follow all facility policies and procedures related to suspected caregiver impairment.
- Students who refuse to submit to testing will be sent home by their community preceptor.

- Students who refuse to submit to testing will not be allowed to participate in any classroom, laboratory, simulation, or clinical agency experiences; the refusal of a urinalysis related to suspected impairment follows the same protocol as a positive drug screen. Please see the Substance Use Testing Procedures outlined on pages 31-35 of the MSN Student Handbook.
- Depending on the circumstances, absences related to impairment will result in a clinical absence at a minimum and may result in dismissal from the program.
- Students who are impaired should coordinate transportation from the clinical site and should not drive themselves to the testing site and/or home.

WNMU requires that should an incident regarding suspected impairment occur, the clinical preceptor/mentor notifies the WNMU course faculty as soon as possible.

## Substance Use Testing Procedures

Note that testing procedures may vary according to state and – in the information provided below – are based on the procedures for New Mexico.

- 1) The student will be removed from the practicum or clinical site without delay.
  - a) The student will be given an opportunity to explain the student’s behavior.
  - b) If the instructor/preceptor suspects impairment, the student shall be sent for a drug screen to a suitable laboratory.
  - c) The preceptor should follow facility protocol for suspected impairment.
  - d) WNMU recommends that a student suspected of impairment coordinate transportation from the clinical site rather than driving themselves.
- 2) To obtain a urine analysis for alcohol and drug testing, the student will follow the protocol established by the facility where they are conducting their clinical/practical experience.
- 3) The reporting of any incident to the applicable state Board of Nursing is at the discretion of the precepting agency, their policies, and [individual state and licensing statutes](#).
- 4) The student cannot return to the clinical or practicum site until they have met with the Associate Dean of the School of Nursing to review the urinalysis results. The student remains responsible for all course or program requirements during such period.
  - a) If the urinalysis is negative, after meeting with the student as outlined above, lead faculty of the course will tell the agency preceptor that the student can return to the clinical site.
  - b) If the urinalysis is positive, after meeting with the student as outlined above, faculty will notify the agency preceptor that the student is not able to return to the clinical site.

- 5) The SONAK will only accept urinalysis results sent certified mail from the testing facility.
  - i) A copy of the urinalysis will be uploaded to the students CastleBranch account, but it will not be accepted as the final result without a paper copy that originates from the testing site, sent to the Associate Dean of SONAK via certified mail.
- 6) If the test results are negative, the student will meet with the instructor and the Associate Dean of the School of Nursing within two working days of receiving the test results to discuss returning to classes (see 4a).
- 7) If the test result is positive, then the student may request and pay for a retest of the collected (split) urine specimen at the original laboratory or another certified laboratory.
  - i) Results from the second test will be sent to the Associate Dean of SONAK via certified mail, originating from the testing facility. This is the only way a second test result will be accepted by SONAK MSN Program.
- 8) If the initial drug or alcohol screen is positive and the student declines a second test at their own expense (see item 7, 7i), then the following actions will occur:
  - a) The student will be notified by the Associate Dean of the School of Nursing or identified designee of the results of the test and will be dismissed from the program.
  - b) All documentation will be sent to the Dean of the College of Professional Studies, the Vice President of Academic Affairs, and the Vice President of Student Affairs and Enrollment Management for further action per the WNMU Sanctions for Violations of the WNMU Student Code of Conduct.
  - c) If the student opts for a re-test of the split specimen at their own expense, they remain on suspension from clinical site activities awaiting the test results of the second specimen. Students are responsible for all coursework during this period.
  - d) The results of the second test will follow the same procedure as outlined above, depending on the results of the second test.
- 9) If a student admits to being impaired by drugs or alcohol at the clinical site, then the student will be removed from the site and treated as for a positive drug screen. The admission of drug or alcohol related impairment follows the same protocol as a positive drug screen.
  - a) Impairment related to other factors that do not include drug or alcohol, i.e., sleep deprivation, will be assessed individually. The student may still be asked to submit to a urinalysis and follow all clinical site policies and procedures.
- 10) If a student fails to comply with clinical site protocol for urinalysis, or refuses to have a drug screen completed, then such failure or refusal shall be treated as a positive drug screen. All documentation will be forwarded to the Dean of the College of Professional Studies, the Vice President of Academic Affairs and the Vice President of Student Affairs and Enrollment Management for further action.

- 11) Students testing positive for drugs and/or alcohol will be strongly advised to complete Drug/Alcohol Rehabilitation Program or a [Diversion Program through their state Board of Nursing](#).
- 12) Results of the test(s) and the contents of the Student Documentation Form shall remain confidential and may be released only to the appropriate faculty of the School of Nursing, Associate Dean for Nursing and Kinesiology (SONAK), Dean of the College of Professional Studies, the Vice President of Academic Affairs, and the Vice President of Student Affairs and Enrollment Management and those with a legitimate need to know.

### Re-admission Opportunities After Program Dismissal (Impairment)

In the event that a student is dismissed from the School of Nursing and/or WNMU for impairment and the student thereafter appeals and is allowed to return to the nursing program, the following steps will be required prior to re-entry.

- a) All WNMU School of Nursing requirements associated with the dismissal must be met.
  - b) All general admission criteria to the [Graduate Division](#) and the [MSN Program](#) must be met.
  - c) The student must hold a valid, unencumbered RN license in the United States.
  - d) The student must provide a negative drug and alcohol urinalysis prior to re-entry.
    - i) The student will pay for the test, which will be conducted at a designated or certified laboratory.
    - ii) For results to be accepted by the School of Nursing and Kinesiology, the results must be sent from the testing laboratory to the Associate Dean of Nursing via certified mail.
    - iii) The student may be requested to submit to a random urinalysis at the discretion of the clinical preceptor/agency per their facility policy and protocol.
    - iv) A positive test will result in immediate dismissal and referred to the Vice President for Student Affairs office for further action with a recommendation from the School of Nursing for permanent dismissal from the nursing program. University guidelines, policies, and procedures will be followed.
- 13) Students who appeal any of the above decisions will remain on suspension pending outcome of the appeal. The procedure for the student appeal process may be found in the [WNMU Program Dismissal Appeals Policy](#).

### Definitions

**Drug:** A drug is any chemical substance that when consumed causes a change in an organism's physiology, including its psychology, if applicable. Drugs are typically

distinguished from food and other substances that provide nutritional support.

Consumption of drugs can be via inhalation, injection, smoking, ingestion, absorption via a patch on the skin, suppository, or dissolution under the tongue. In pharmacology, a drug is a chemical substance, typically of known structure, which, when administered to a living organism, produces a biological effect. A pharmaceutical drug, also called a medication or medicine, is a chemical substance used to treat, cure, prevent, or diagnose a disease or to promote well-being (AHSD, 2007; SMD, 2008; Ritter et al., 2023).

**Legal Drugs:** Legal drugs include over the counter and prescribed medications for the specific individual. The School of Nursing prohibits the use/abuse of such drugs to the extent that behavior or judgment is adversely affected.

Per the Food and Drug Administration (FDA, n.d.), a [legal] drug is defined as:

- A substance recognized by an official pharmacopoeia or formulary.
- A substance intended for use in the diagnosis, cure, mitigation, treatment, or prevention of disease.
- A substance (other than food) intended to affect the structure or any function of the body.
- A substance intended for use as a component of a medicine but not a device or a component, part, or accessory of a device.
- Biological products are included within this definition and are generally covered by the same laws and regulations, but differences exist regarding their manufacturing processes (chemical process versus biological process) (n.d., para. 15).

### Medical Marijuana and Cannabinoids

Cannabis is not recognized as a legal drug under federal law. The WNMU policy for urine drug screening services which report a detectable levels of marijuana metabolites as a positive result regardless of whether the donor holds a New Mexico Department of Health Medical Cannabis Card (“Card”). Per WNMU SONAK’s clinical affiliation agreements, we are unable to send students to partnering facilities with positive drug screens even if students hold a valid Card. Please be advised that some cannabidiol (CBD) products can be contaminated with cannabitol (CBN) which can cause positive test results (CNM, 2020).

**Illegal Drugs:** Illegal drugs include those controlled substances (certain drugs or substances that are subject to or have potential for abuse or physiological dependence) under federal or state law that are not authorized for sale, possession or use/abuse confirmed, detectable levels), and legal drugs which are obtained or distributed illegally. Manufacture, use/abuse, possession, sale, purchase, or transfer of illegal drugs is

prohibited (Title 42, 2008). The WNMU Student Handbook and WNMU Policies further elaborates on University policies concerning illegal drugs.

**Impairment:** the state of being diminished, weakened, or damaged, especially mentally or physically (Toney-Butler & Siela, 2022).

**Chemical Impairment: [specific to healthcare]:** The inability or impending inability to provide safe, professional activities and duties due to a behavioral, mental, or physical disorder related to alcohol or drugs. A chemically impaired person is one who is under the influence of a substance that interferes with mood, perception, or consciousness resulting in the physical and/or behavioral characteristics which affect the individual's ability to meet standards of performance, behavior and/or safety in classroom, clinical, practical or laboratory course settings (Toney-Butler & Siela, 2022; Lengel, 2023).

**Legal Use of Substance under Direction of Healthcare Provider:** A student taking legal drugs must be able to provide documentation of a medical reason for such in the event of a positive drug screen. This student may not participate in any clinical, practical or laboratory settings if impaired. All attendance policies remain in place, and the student is responsible for completing all course or program requirements.

**Working days are defined for this section's purpose as Monday through Friday, excluding school holidays or WNMU closure periods.** If the last day of the designated period is a school holiday or WNMU closure period, it will run until the end of the next day, not a school holiday or WNMU closure period. The term "WNMU closure period" includes the week of final exams.

### Factors Suggesting Impairment

Students while in the classroom, patient care area, clinical, practical or laboratory setting may be asked to submit to a drug test, if cause or reasonable suspicion of substance use exists. Factors which could establish cause/reasonable suspicion include, but are not limited to:

- Unsteady gait
- Unusual sleepiness or drowsiness
- Slurred speech or change in the student's usual speech pattern
- Blood-shot eyes
- Unusually disheveled appearance
- Aggressive tone of voice or body language

- Physical aggression
- Odor of alcohol or marijuana
- Residual odor peculiar to some chemical or controlled substances
- Unexplained and/or frequent absenteeism during a scheduled class or clinical laboratory
- Personality changes or disorientation
- Inappropriate behavior which suggests that the student is under the influence of a chemical substance that impairs or could impair clinical, practical or laboratory judgment.
- Repeated failure to follow instructions, policies, or procedures
- Violation of clinical, practical or laboratory facility or WNMU or School of Nursing safety policies
- Involvement in an accident or near-accident
- Decrease in manual dexterity and/or coordination in body movement
- Presence of drugs/drug paraphernalia in student's possession
- Alcohol in a student's possession
- Theft or absence of narcotics from the student's clinical or practical site(s)  
(Toney-Butler et al., 2022; Trinkoff et al., 2021; Lengel, 2023; Knipe & Petula, 2007).

### RN-to-BSN Program Dismissal

In addition to those conditions described elsewhere in these guidelines, any of the following or a combination of the following are grounds for dismissal from the MSN program.

Performance in the clinical agency which could jeopardize the patient including:

**Physical Hazard:** Any action or inaction on the part of the student which threatens the patient's physical well-being. The critical elements for concluding that the student has caused a physical hazard will depend on the situation as judged by the instructor, in conjunction with the clinical preceptor (when one is involved), and the instructor's evaluation of the student's behavior. The instructor is alerted of behavior in the student which violates principles of safety, and/or lack of student preparation. Documentation is the responsibility of the instructor (Hughes, 2008).

**Emotional Hazard:** Any action on the part of the student which threatens the patient's emotional well-being. There are no pre-determined criteria listed under this area because they are entirely dependent upon the student, the patient, and the situation. The instructor will evaluate student behaviors with the clinical preceptor, which creates emotional distress to the student's patients. Documentation is the responsibility of the instructor (Hughes, 2008).

**Failure to maintain patient confidentiality:** Students must comply with Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) standards within each clinical/practicum facility. These standards for security, privacy and confidentiality apply to paper documents, electronic documents, information systems and verbal communications. Students will be cited and summarily dismissed from the program for failure to maintain patient confidentiality. Violations may include, but are not limited to:

- Username/Password/Log-in sharing
- Accessing a record of a patient and/or verbally communicating information about a patient without a legitimate reason.
- Releasing, disclosing, or sending patient data inappropriately or without proper permission or authorization, including social networking sites. (See the social networking policy.)
- Releasing data for personal gain.
- Intentional destruction or falsification of data
- Releasing data with the intent to alter any personal or associated outcome or to harm any individual or the organization.
- Inappropriate use of systems resources with knowledge and intent to cause corruption of data or network systems.
- Accessing the student's own medical records information or those of one or more relatives and taking inappropriate actions because of this access.
- Removal of patient data from the facility upon which the patient's identifying information is displayed (without marking out or otherwise covering the identifying information).
- Photographing or recording a client/patient without appropriate consent.
- Unacceptable behavior including behavior that is contrary to the philosophy of the University, the nursing program, and/or the clinical agency. This includes any of the
- above listed behaviors, exceeding the proper scope of practice, breaching academic integrity, and failure to maintain ethical standards, legal standards, and client/patient confidentiality.
- Violation of codes of conduct specified in these guidelines, the WNMU catalog, or the WNMU Student Handbook.

If a student violates one of the above areas of concern, then the student will receive an "F" for the course or will be dropped from the course. Appeal of such action shall be provided under the Student Academic Complaints in the WNMU Student Guidelines. Students who are dismissed from the program for jeopardizing the patient or for unacceptable behavior will not be considered for readmission.

## Scope of Discipline

In addition to dismissal, nursing students may be subject to grade reduction, suspension, or expulsion, or other forms of discipline as deemed appropriate by the School of Nursing Assistant Dean or WNMU Administration in accordance with applicable WNMU policies and procedures.

## Appeal from Dismissal

A nursing student dismissed or recommended for dismissal may appeal such action under the WNMU Program Dismissal Appeals Policy.

## Student Academic Complaint Procedures

Students with a complaint involving the assignment of grades or the professional conduct of an instructor that does not involve a complaint of discrimination or harassment will refer to the [WNMU Student Handbook](#) Student Academic Complaint Policy for the appropriate steps and information to address said complaint.

## Program Evaluation

- Faculty members will meet each semester to review all courses required of RN-to-BSN students. Data from student evaluations will be reviewed.
- Course evaluation forms submitted by students will be available to nursing faculty. A summary of student comments and suggestions are utilized to revise course content. Changes in course sequence, teaching methods, required courses and pre-requisite courses will be discussed by faculty in May of each academic year. Data needed for the meeting will be presented by the Associate Dean of Nursing. Information on the evaluation process will be submitted to the Vice President for Academic Affairs.
- Students will be asked to submit information on clinical/practicum learning. This information will be used to evaluate and revise plans for clinical/practicum experience.
- Information on library and audiovisual resources will provide data for future acquisition of materials. A meeting for collaboration between library personnel and nursing faculty as needed to update library holding will be held regularly.
- Review of course evaluation forms will be done at the end of each semester and/or summer session. Specific course revisions will be implemented before the course is presented again. Course changes are tracked on Course Quality Improvement forms

in the RN-to-BSN Faculty Resource Shell in the current learning management system.

- The RN-to-BSN Coordinator and/or Undergraduate Program Director will be responsible for collecting and summarizing the data necessary for curriculum revision. All revisions will be submitted to University committees, the New Mexico Board of Nursing, and accrediting bodies as appropriate.

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## Appendix A: Release and Waivers

### Consent or Declination of Use of Image/Recordings

I hereby grant to Western New Mexico University, its successors, licensees, affiliates, agents, and assignees, the right to photograph me, to make audio and video recordings of me, and to use such photographs and recordings in publications, including the University's website.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Please print name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Licensure as a Registered Nurse (RN)

The student agrees to maintain a current, valid, unencumbered U.S. RN license while enrolled in either the RN-to-BSN, MSN or other WNMU SONAK program where applicable.

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Please print name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Acknowledgement of Receipt STUDENT HANDBOOK

\_\_\_\_\_ I have read the following handbook

(please initial the appropriate selection)

\_\_\_\_\_ RN-to-BSN Student Handbook

\_\_\_\_\_ MSN Student Handbook

**and agree to abide by the outlined policies, procedures, and guidelines within.**

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Please print name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



## Appendix C: WNMU School of Nursing and Kinesiology Student Success Plan Sample

|                      |                       |                    |
|----------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Student Name:</b> | <b>Program Track:</b> | <b>Date:</b>       |
| <b>Course:</b>       | <b>Instructor:</b>    | <b>Grade/Code:</b> |

| Student's Strengths<br><small>(completed by student and instructor)</small> | Concerns<br><small>(include level specific SLO followed by brief narrative)</small> | Strategies to address concerns:<br><small>(what student can do to help with improvement; can include what student needs from faculty member)</small> | Measures/Outcomes<br><small>(What student behaviors need to be exhibited consistently by the end of the course)</small> | Evaluations |
|---|---|--|---|-------------|
|   |   |  |   |             |

- Failure to demonstrate program expectations and/or course evaluation guidelines may lead to removal for the duration of the course(s) involved and/or a failing grade.
- The Student Success Plan may be shared with instructors involved in the course to assist the student in successfully completing the plan.
- The student must demonstrate passing performance for each of the program expectations to avoid removal from the course.
- Student signature indicates receipt and understanding of the Student Success Plan.

**Signatures:**

|                    |  |                        |  |
|--------------------|--|------------------------|--|
| Student:           |  | Program Director:      |  |
| Date:              |  | Date:                  |  |
| Course Instructor: |  | Preceptor (if needed): |  |
| Date:              |  | Date:                  |  |

