



## **Western Connecticut State University**

### **STUDENT POLICIES GOVERNING ACADEMIC AND PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE UNDERGRADUATE BACCALAUREATE NURSING PROGRAM**

1. These policies are consistent with and supplementary to policies in the current
  - **WCSU Student Handbook**
  - **Undergraduate University Catalog: Nursing page & Nursing Department Website**
2. The provisions of this **Nursing Handbook** are not to be regarded as an irrevocable contract between the Department of Nursing and the student. The Department reserves the right to change any provision of any requirement at any time. Students will be notified in writing of such changes within a reasonable time frame. Students are expected to adhere to the most recent updated policies.

*Reviewed by Student Committee September 2018, March 2022, October 2023*  
*Approved by Student Committee April 2019, February 21, 2024.*  
*Department of Nursing Reviewed & Approved March 6, 2024.*  
*Revised March 2023, March 2024*

**Western Connecticut State University**  
**Department of Nursing**  
**Mission, Philosophy, Outcomes**

**Mission**

The Department of Nursing strives to provide a nursing education that is aimed at preparing beginning and advanced practice nurses to meet the ever-changing health care needs of Connecticut and the surrounding region. This can be achieved through:

- providing a dynamic curriculum that is responsive to students and community needs; based on a strong foundation in the liberal arts and sciences, and a commitment to challenge students to be lifelong learners.
- developing clinical competency, scholarship and research.
- contributing to the improvement of and services to the university, the profession and communities.
- sustaining a vibrant inclusive program that reflects the diversity of the communities served.
- advocating for the nursing profession and for those whom we serve.

**Philosophy**

The faculty believe that Nursing:

- is an independent scientifically based discipline.
- student education comprises content (liberal arts, sciences, nursing theory, practice), processes (theoretical, applied) and context (university, community). The purpose is to prepare baccalaureate through advanced practice nurses.
- is centered on the care of clients and based on health promotion and disease prevention throughout the lifespan. Our philosophical framework includes concepts from Virginia Henderson's (1955) nursing theory. Henderson states, "The unique function of the nurse is to assist the individual, sick or well, in the performance of those activities contributing to health or its recovery (or to peaceful death) that he would perform unaided if he had the necessary strength, will or knowledge."
- incorporates nursing paradigm that include health, wellness, and illness from birth to death. Nursing is an essential human service in which practitioners assist clients to meet basic needs by eliciting, supporting and augmenting adaptive responses. Nurses assist individuals and families to achieve and maintain optimum health, correct maladaptive behavior and cope with experiences of illness and death.
- utilizes the processes of teaching, scientific inquiry, and systems and resource management including technology to support and augment nursing care.
- collaborates with interprofessional teams in the delivery of health care.
- promotes the interests of the profession, improves professional practice, increases public awareness of health care, and directs economic resources for optimal patient outcomes.
- is a dynamic process of developing critical thinking and clinical judgement.
- is sensitive to and respectful of the varied ways in which students learn using a student-centered approach.
- supports health equity in a global society and recognizes the impact of health disparities, social determinants of health, cultural competence, and social justice.
- embraces a diverse student population with dignity, equity, inclusion, and respect.

Approved 5/23/22

**Program Outcomes:**

- 1) Synthesize knowledge from the arts, sciences, and humanities with nursing theory as the basis for making nursing practice decisions.
- 2) Exercise clinical judgement in using the nursing process to assess, diagnose, plan, implement, and evaluate care provided to individuals, families and communities.
- 3) Apply clinical judgement in the provision of preventive, curative, supportive, and restorative care for individuals, families, and communities in both structured and unstructured settings.
- 4) Use a variety of communication techniques, in the process of assessment, counseling, and therapeutic interventions with clients, families, and populations.
- 5) Develop and implement a variety of strategies in the provision of health teaching for clients, families, and populations.
- 6) Utilize scientific inquiry, technology and research findings to improve nursing care delivery and to advance the profession.
- 7) Identify information and resources to achieve optimum client outcomes.
- 8) Demonstrate leadership, management, and collaborative skills as a member of an interprofessional team within the health care delivery system.
- 9) Apply autonomous ethical decision making and advocacy in the care of clients.
- 10) Demonstrate accountability in accordance with standards of professional nursing practice.

Approved 5/23/22

## I. ATTENDANCE/COMMUNICATION

The nursing major prepares students to practice as a registered nurse (RN). This program prepares students for professional nursing practice, and adheres to professional standards set forth by the American Nurses Association and other professional organizations. Therefore, attendance and professional behavior are expected in all classroom, laboratory, simulation or clinical settings.

Attendance and punctuality align with professional accountability. Students are expected to be prepared for all classroom, laboratory, simulation, or clinical experiences prior to scheduled sessions, and be respectful of their peers and faculty. Students not prepared for class, laboratory, simulation and or clinical settings may be issued an Academic/Clinical Warning. No electronic communication devices (i.e. cell phones, ear buds, smart watches, laptops, and recording devices, etc.) are allowed to be “on” in inpatient clinical settings or during class or laboratory except at the discretion of the clinical or classroom instructor. Students may be asked to put away electronic communication devices during class, clinical or laboratory experiences. Computers used in the class or laboratory experiences must be used for class work only. Students are expected to **regularly check their WCSU email account** for course related information and correspondence. Important course or clinical information may be sent via email during months the student is not in school. It is recommended that the student check his/her email regularly. Personal email accounts are not to be used for course communication.

### A. **Class Attendance**

Class attendance is expected in all courses to meet the learning objectives. The instructor will advise the students of the attendance policy during the first week of the semester in the course outline and clinical syllabus. The syllabus will provide information about the inclusion of attendance in grading criteria.

### B. **College Laboratory/Clinical/Simulation Attendance**

College Laboratory/Clinical/ Simulation Attendance (Clinical site experiences: both on site and alternate experiences) is **mandatory**. Clinical and/or laboratory experiences may be scheduled during the day, evening, night and during weekends. Clinical placements are made by the WCSU Undergraduate Program Coordinator, Clinical Coordinator, and Department Chair. Clinical placements are based on clinical site and faculty availability. Students are **required** to attend all laboratory, simulation, and clinical hours. Students must be able to show growth and progress towards meeting college laboratory and clinical objectives to be successful.

Students must complete any missed clinical time to meet clinical objectives. This can be met through the use of simulation, case study, or other alternate assignments deemed appropriate by the clinical instructor. However, excessive absences cannot be accommodated, and the Undergraduate Program Coordinator and the Department Chair will be notified.

Students must arrive 15 minutes before clinical starts and remain for the scheduled time unless excused by the laboratory/clinical lab faculty. It is the responsibility of the student to inform the clinical instructor if they are going to be late or absent.

If a student is absent from clinical for an extended period of time, he/she will need to be cleared by his/her healthcare provider to return to clinical. Multiple absences from clinical must be reported to the Undergraduate Program Coordinator and the Department Chair. Make up for clinical will be at the discretion of the clinical faculty member. In the event of a communicable illness or injury the student should notify the instructor as soon as possible. If ill or injured, students should not attend clinical. If there is a communicable illness, injury, and/or disability occurrence students must be evaluated prior to their return to clinical by a health care provider. A healthcare provider documentation and/or health clearance form stating that the student is able to attend clinical/laboratory without restrictions in the laboratory/clinical area is required. This documentation will be made available to the Department Chair, Undergraduate Program Coordinator, Clinical instructor, and student. Students must be compliant with the technical standards in order to continue the nursing program after an extended period of illness, injury or disability. Technical standards form is located on WCSU Nursing Department website under forms.

- Department Chair and Undergraduate Program Coordinator must be aware when student is exposed to COVID and or tests positive for COVID concerning clinical and lab. The Department of Nursing must adhere to current agency and/or school COVID policy. Students must report a positive Covid test to the WCSU Health Center via the link on the Health Center web page.
- If a student is exposed to a blood borne pathogen while in clinical follow the clinical site protocol. Students and faculty must provide their own health insurance for costs associated with exposure. If there is no facility protocol for exposure the student must be seen in the ED or by their own provider.

C. **Communication**

It is the responsibility of the student to communicate with faculty using the WCSU email system. School email should be used to communicate with faculty.

**Students are not expected to attend clinical/college lab/class and will inform their instructor if they have:**

- A fever (temperature above 100 F or 38 C). Students must be fever free for 24 hours before returning to the college laboratory/class/clinical setting without the use of antipyretic medications prior to returning to the clinical area.
- An open wound, a draining wound, or undiagnosed skin rash to an exposed skin area
- Experienced vomiting and/or diarrhea within the last 24 hours
- Impaired judgement, drowsiness, inability to drive or perform safely in the clinical area due to the effects of prescription or nonprescription medications.
- Less than 24 hours of antibiotic therapy subsequent to a diagnosis of a communicable bacterial infection
- Exposed herpes lesions

**In the case of unavoidable illness or emergency:**

Students are responsible for notifying the clinical instructor when an absence or lateness is unavoidable. Clinical instructors will notify the Undergraduate Program Coordinator and the Department Chair of absences, illnesses, and emergencies. Students are

responsible for arranging laboratory or clinical make up with the college laboratory/clinical faculty before the end of their clinical rotation. Any clinical absence jeopardizes the achievement of course and program objectives. Absences or failure to notify instructor, will result in clinical warning and/or clinical failure. Excessive absences may result in course failure.

### **Attendance due to weather related issues:**

The student must create an account with opt in for safety through the university in order for the student to receive notifications about university closings due to inclement weather. If the university is closed, there is no clinical. If the university opening is delayed, the student must follow the directions of the clinical instructor. If the student is already in the clinical area during a delayed opening or early closure the student will follow the directions of the clinical instructor. Students should consider their own personal safety when driving to and from clinical settings and are responsible for notifying clinical faculty of any absence due to inclement weather.

## **II. CLINICAL PRACTICE**

It is the responsibility of the student to obtain all necessary supplies, equipment, uniforms, and mandatory computer programs for clinical. The expenses for these items are the responsibility of the student. This section will provide an overview of some of the expenses related to participation in clinical. All items must be purchased prior to the start of the clinical experience.

### **A. Malpractice Insurance/Licensure**

Coverage is provided by the university only when students are participating in university or department clinical activities. Students must adhere to all standards set forth by the Connecticut Nurse Practice Act and the ANA Code of Ethics as well as institutional policies while participating in clinical experiences.

RN-BS students must maintain and provide documentation of current RN licensure in Connecticut.

### **B. Health Insurance**

Students must carry their own health insurance and must be able to show proof of enrollment.

### **C. CPR: Cardiopulmonary Certification/Recertification**

Current Healthcare Provider Basic Life Support (adult/child/infant with defibrillator) CPR certification is required for students to attend any clinical experience. Evidence of CPR certification must be provided to CastleBranch by **June 1<sup>st</sup>** or students cannot begin clinical during the Spring semester of the sophomore year. The renewal date will be set two years from the issuing date. This testing is available through the American Red Cross (CPR/AED for Professional Rescuer) or American Heart Association (CPR/AED for Health Care Providers). You must choose an onsite course with skill performance. Proof of CPR must be uploaded to Castlebranch, only then can students be cleared by the undergraduate coordinator to attend clinical at participating agencies. Failure to be CPR re-certified as one moves through program, may result in a clinical warning and the student will NOT be able to attend clinical.

**D. Connecticut Hospital Association online course for Health and Safety**

Students are required to read the CHA (Connecticut Hospital Association) Student Orientation Curriculum Guide and pass the post-test annually. Upload proof to CastleBranch. Link to test: <https://www.chime.org/education/ct-health-and-safety-training-course/>

**E. Technical Standards**

In order to be successful in the WCSU Nursing program, students must be able to meet the following technical standards and these standards must be continuously assessed. Students in the nursing program must have the ability and skills in the following domains: observational/communication ability, motor ability, intellectual/conceptual ability, and behavioral, interpersonal, and emotional ability. Students must be able to independently, with or without accommodation meet the following technical standards:

**Observation/Communication Ability – Nursing students must be able to:**

- Effectively communicate both verbally and non-verbally with patients, peers, faculty, and other healthcare professionals.
- Effectively use senses of vision, touch, hearing, and smell to interpret data.
- Demonstrate abilities with speech, hearing, reading, writing, proficiency in English language, and computer literacy.

**Motor Ability – Nursing students must be able to:**

- Display gross and fine motor skills, have physical endurance, strength, and mobility to carry out nursing procedures.
- Possess physical and mental stamina to meet demands associated with excessive periods of standing, moving, physical exertion, and sitting.
- Perform and/or assist with procedure, treatment, administration of medication, operate medical equipment, and assist with patient care activities such as lifting, wheelchair guidance, and mobility.

**Intellectual/Conceptual Ability – Nursing students must be able to:**

- Problem solve, measure, calculate, reason, analyze, and synthesize data to make decisions, often in a time urgent environment
- Incorporate, apply and synthesize new information from teachers, peers, and the nursing literature
- Interpret and respond appropriately to data from electronic and other monitoring devices

**Behavioral, Interpersonal, and Emotional Ability – Nursing students must be able to:**

- Tolerate physically taxing workloads and function effectively during stressful situations
- Display flexibility and adaptability in the work environment
- Function in cases of uncertainty that are inherent in clinical situations involving patients/clients
- Possess the skills required for full utilization of the student's intellectual abilities
- Exercise stable and sound judgment

- Establish rapport and maintain sensitive, interpersonal relationships with others from a variety of social, emotional, cultural, and intellectual background
- Accept and integrate constructive criticism given in the classroom and clinical setting

See Technical Standards form located on Nursing website. <https://www.wcsu.edu/nursing/forms/>

#### F. **Background Checks, Drug Testing, and Fingerprinting**

Clinical practice experiences in healthcare agencies are a required component of program completion and graduation with a pre-licensure credential or baccalaureate nursing degree. Students must meet all standards and requirements necessary to complete required clinical placements. Failure to meet the standard will result in an inability to complete the program.

Most clinical agencies require that students undergo a criminal background check before commencing the clinical practice experience.

A background check will be administered through CastleBranch. This must be completed by June 1<sup>st</sup>. The results of the background check will be released to the agencies where clinical experiences are planned. In addition, some clinical agencies may require additional requirements that will be an additional cost to the student.

The results of a student's criminal background check may prevent a student from commencing or completing a clinical placement. Failure to complete all required clinical placements will prevent a student from graduating from the Nursing Program at WCSU. The following is a partial list of crimes and offenses that may negatively impact a student's ability to complete required clinical placements and RN licensure: any type of sexual crime, crime of violence, drug crime, weapons crime, property crimes, theft, robbery, burglary, embezzlement or fraud, public intoxication or substance abuse, and other felonies and serious offenses which would not be appropriate in a healthcare/patient care environment. A subsequent background check with fingerprinting will be required.

Additional background and fingerprinting may be required for specific Health Care Agencies and at an additional cost to the student.

#### **Drug Screening**

According to the Connecticut Department of Labor, nursing is a high-risk occupation. Due to health and safety concerns, nurses must conduct healthcare and educational activities fully in control of their manual dexterity, mental faculties, and judgment. The presence or use of drugs, which may interfere with the judgment or motor coordination of nursing students in a healthcare setting, poses an unacceptable risk for patients, colleagues, the University, and affiliating clinical agencies. Western Connecticut State University recognizes its responsibility to provide a safe, efficient academic environment for students and to cooperate with clinical agencies' requirements in providing for the safe and effective care of their patients during nursing students' clinical experiences in their facilities, the University has instituted drug testing for nursing students.

Students will be required to participate in a urine toxicology drug screening to comply



with clinical agency requirements. **MOST** clinical agencies require urine drug screening either annually or more frequently depending on the clinical agency's policies. When the student is notified that a urine drug screen is required, the test must be completed within the required time frame for the student to begin or continue in clinical experiences in the nursing program. Student is responsible for the cost and will be notified by the Department of Nursing through WSCU email.

**Pre-Clinical Drug Screening:** Drug screening will occur prior to nursing students' participation in clinical. Drug screening may be repeated thereafter, if required by the clinical agency that the student is assigned to for any clinical experience. An outside vendor (e.g. CastleBranch) will oversee drug screening using certified laboratories. Any records of such tests shall be treated as confidential pursuant to the Family Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Refusal to complete the drug screening as required may result in the student being removed from the clinical rotation, which can lead to the inability to progress or graduate from the nursing program.

**Prescribed Drugs:** If a student tests positive for a prescribed drug other than medically certified marijuana (See section below for medically certified marijuana), they must provide written documentation to the testing laboratory's Medical Review Officer (MRO) who will then review the documentation and report the drug screen results as positive (failed) or negative (passed). A positive or failed drug screen will result in the student being unable to attend clinical experiences which can lead to the inability to progress or graduate from the nursing program. The student will be required to meet with the Dean of the School of Professional Studies if a drug screen is reported as positive after the review by the MRO. **Nonprescribed Drugs:** If a student's drug screen result is positive for a nonprescribed drug including recreational marijuana this is a failed drug screen. A positive or failed drug screen will result in the student being unable to attend clinical experiences which can lead to the inability to progress or graduate from the nursing program. The student must meet with the Dean of the School of Professional Studies.

**Medically Certified Marijuana:** Medical marijuana can be certified for specific approved conditions in Connecticut. However, in accordance with federal law, a positive toxicology screen for legally certified marijuana may prohibit a student from being placed in a clinical setting that accepts federal funding. If a student tests positive for marijuana, they must provide a copy of a current, valid State certification card to the Department of Nursing Chair. At any time during the student's nursing program, if clinical sites accepting medically certified marijuana use are not available, this will result in the student being unable to attend clinical experiences which can lead to the inability to progress or graduate from the nursing program.

There may be instances when drug testing needs to be repeated. This cost burden falls to the student and must be completed in a timely fashion, or the student will be prohibited from attending clinical.

G. **Health Requirements**

The following is a list of items required by clinical placement agencies, which must be on file with CastleBranch for students to attend clinical. The student is responsible for the cost of obtaining the necessary health documentation. Health requirements must be

submitted by June 1st. Students will be cleared to attend clinical by the coordinator only when this information is uploaded to with CastleBranch at <https://www.castlebranch.com/sign-in>. Students will be removed from nursing courses if they do not submit required health and or clinical requirements by June 1st. Failure to comply with health documentation via the CastleBranch system will result in a clinical warning and will result in the student not being able to attend clinical.

**i. Physical Examination**

A complete physical examination is required every 2 years. The physical must be performed by a licensed Medical Doctor, Doctor of Osteopathy, Physician Assistant or Advance Practice Registered Nurse and must be documented on the form provided on the nursing website

**ii. Tuberculosis Screening (Annual)**

All students must provide documentation of annual tuberculosis screening, also known as a “TB Test”. Screening results must be validated by either of the following methods:

- PPD is initially done prior to starting the program, followed by an annual single PPD every year thereafter.
- Quantiferon Gold blood test yearly  
If a student has a positive skin or blood test, the student must submit results of a current chest x-ray that confirms that there is no active pulmonary disease. Additionally, if a student has a history of active or latent tuberculosis infection that was treated with medication, the student must submit evidence of appropriate and complete treatment in the form of a confirmatory letter from his/her primary care physician or pulmonary specialist.

**iii. Measles, Mumps & Rubella (MMR)**

- All students must provide documentation of vaccinations or a positive MMR titer.
- For negative or equivocal results on MMR titer, students will refer to their CastleBranch account for instructions.

**iv. Varicella**

- All students must provide medical documentation of evidence of disease (positive Varicella titer) or vaccine record of a positive Varicella titer.
- In the event of negative or equivocal results on Varicella titer, students will refer to their CastleBranch account for instructions.

**v. Hepatitis B (Hep B)**

- All students must provide documentation of a positive Hepatitis B titer.
- For negative or equivocal results on Hepatitis B titer, students will refer to their CastleBranch account for instructions.
- Students who decline the Hepatitis B vaccine must provide a signed Declination Form.
- Clinical agencies may prohibit a student from certain clinical activities if the student has declined Hepatitis B vaccinations.

- vi. **Tetanus, Diphtheria & Pertussis (Tdap)**
  - All students must provide documentation of one dose of Tetanus, Diphtheria & Pertussis (Tdap) within the past 10 years. Those individuals who are unsure if they have previously received a dose of Tdap should receive a one-time dose of Tdap as soon as feasible, without regard to the interval since the previous dose of Td immunization (Tetanus & diphtheria, also known as a “tetanus shot”).
- vii. **Influenza**
  - All students must provide annual documentation of current influenza vaccination during the current flu season, which is identified by the Connecticut Department of Health as August 1st – March 31st. Students will upload documentation of the influenza vaccine by mid-October. This requirement date may change if clinical agencies state they want to have the vaccine earlier than Oct.
- viii. **COVID**
  - COVID vaccine #1, #2, and booster is required prior to attending clinical. Students must follow the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Department of Public Health recommendations for clinical settings. These requirements are subject to change contingent to CDC and Department of Public Health recommendations.
- ix. **Additional Clinical and Health Requirements per agency requirements:**
  - Clinical and health requirements are subject to change at any time depending on CDC or the CT Department of Public health recommendations as well as any requirements established by our affiliating clinical agencies.

**F. Costs:**

The student is responsible for all costs associated with the clinical and health requirements incurred while in the program.

### **III. STUDENT BEHAVIORS**

The following behaviors and actions are recognized as fundamental to nursing practice. The ANA Guide to the Code of Ethics for Nurses (2015) provides the framework for these student expectations.

**A. Students Clinical Expectations:**

1. Demonstrates responsibility and accountability for practice by adhering to course expectations.
2. Demonstrates responsibility and accountability by completing written assignments on time.
3. Demonstrates respect for patients and the profession of nursing by adhering to the WCSU Department of Nursing and agency dress code policies/behavioral expectations.

4. Maintains privacy and confidentiality of health-related information in accordance with HIPPA regulations.
5. Delivers care in a non-judgmental and non-discriminatory manner sensitive to client diversity.
6. Realistically assesses own strengths and limitations, seeks help appropriately and is responsive to constructive criticism regarding performance.
7. Seeks out new opportunities for learning and professional development.
8. Demonstrates adequate preparation for clinical responsibilities.
9. Works in collaboration with team members and agencies.

**B. Student nurse behaviors which may result in clinical probation, dismissal, and/or failure include but not limited to:**

1. Falsifying a client's record
2. Violation of HIPPA regulations (i.e. breach of clients' confidentiality)
3. Failure to adhere to principles of safe nursing practice (i.e. safe medication administration)
4. Inadequate preparation for clinical responsibilities
5. Inability to recognize limitations and failure to seek appropriate help in time-sensitive situations
6. Dishonest communication with clients, families, faculty, agency staff
7. Denying responsibility for one's actions
8. Participation in actions that may threaten the safety of clients, peers, faculty, others in the clinical setting (i.e. being under the influence of drugs or alcohol, verbal/sexual/physical abuse)

Infractions related to the aforementioned behaviors may also result in civil, federal or state penalties.

**C. Unsafe practice is a violation of any part whatsoever of the above identified areas of safe practice. (Refer to the WCSU Student Handbook grievance policy.)**

1. Unsafe practice, in any form, results in Disciplinary Action.
2. A student will be suspended from the clinical experience immediately if, in the professional judgment of a faculty member, the student has demonstrated unsafe practice in a clinical/laboratory area or exhibited unprofessional behavior.
  - The faculty member, as the primary clinical instructor, who suspended the student will immediately notify the Undergraduate Program Coordinator and Department Chair.
  - It is understood that the primary clinical instructor is solely responsible for evaluating the student and assigning the student grade for the clinical experience. The Undergraduate Program Coordinator and Department Chair, serves as a forum for record keeping and notice to the student and is not responsible for grading the student. The clinical faculty member is responsible for notifying the student of the grade for clinical.
  - In the event a student demonstrates unsafe practice in the clinical setting the agency standards may take precedence over the Department of Nursing Student

Handbook

- The students have the right to appeal the final course grade (see WCSU Student Handbook)

D. **As part of our mission to engage in a collaborative and collegial community of scholars we endorse the following statements about civility.**

- Uphold the honor and dignity of each student, faculty, staff, patient, client, and in all of our interactions.
- Promote an environment of inclusiveness where diversity is embraced and celebrated in a climate of tolerance, transparency, accountability, and fair and honest communication; and
- Support a community in which all persons can work and learn together to promote the highest level of intra- and inter-professional collaboration.

Civility should be present in verbal and written communications. This is reflected by the following examples:

- Listening to others' point of view and respecting differences in views and opinions
- Giving others full attention when they are speaking
- Respecting privacy
- Refraining from gossip

Academic incivility negatively impacts faculty, and student well-being, weakens professional relationships, and impedes effective teaching and learning. Uncivil behaviors that interfere with the teaching and learning environment will not be tolerated. Respect and caring behaviors are expected in both the in person and online learning environments.

#### IV. DRESS CODE

All students are expected to be professionally attired in lab and clinical and will be guided by faculty and/or agency expectations. Students must order WCSU nursing department approved scrubs. These specific styles are associated with the WCSU nursing program.

1. White scrub top and lab coat, and Navy-blue scrub pants. Students must order uniforms from the company designated by the Department of Nursing. Each lab coat and or scrub top must have the WCSU nursing program shield to the left arm (can be purchased at the bookstore). Each scrub top and or lab coat must be embroidered in navy with Western CT State University and Nursing Student. Details for embroidering are provided in NUR 205 Fundamentals of Nursing class as a handout and can be requested from the Undergraduate Program Coordinator.
2. Clean plain white nursing shoes and/or sneakers can be worn. No other colors or detailing. No sandals, open backed or open-weave clogs.
3. A white name pin with navy blue lettering can be ordered from the bookstore on campus. Details for the name pin are provided in the handout given in NUR 205 Fundamentals of Nursing class. There are three lines on the name pin: Western CT State University, Your Name, and Student Nurse. This can be obtained at the bookstore.
4. Students must wear a picture ID when participating in clinical practice, as required by Connecticut regulations. If a picture ID is not provided by the clinical agency, your WCSU picture ID will be used.

5. Community and psychiatric clinical experience dress code is individualized and determined by the agency's policies. Students must contact Community and Psychiatric Nursing Faculty for information about specifics for these rotations.
6. A watch with a second-hand, black or blue ink pen, and stethoscope are required. A sphygmomanometer may be required for some clinical experiences.
7. Jewelry is limited to one pair of stud ear earrings and a wedding band. No other visible body piercing or jewelry is allowed. Facial piercings including visible tongue rings must be removed. Gauges must be removed.
8. Visible tattoos must be covered.
9. Hair is to be secured away from the face and off the shoulders. Hair needs to be secured by a hair clip, braiding, and or hair tie. Long hair must be up, and off shoulders securely fastened. Artificial rainbow hair coloring is not permitted.
10. Beards and mustaches must be neatly trimmed (except for religious or cultural practices).
11. Perfumes and colognes are not to be worn in clinical settings. Strong or noxious odors can be traumatic for patients (vomiting, allergy sensitives, etc.).
12. Fingernails must be short/active length. Artificial nails (acrylic), gel nails, nail tips, and coloring are prohibited as these are infection control breeches. Long nails may injure a patient.
13. Make up must be neutral and not pose a distraction or health hazard.
14. No artificial eyelashes (i.e. temporary eyelashes or extensions).
15. No gum chewing allowed in clinical or college laboratory.
16. Use of electronic devices for personal communication and activities are prohibited in the clinical and college laboratory areas.  
Refer to Social Media Section.
17. When in the clinical area for reasons other than clinical experience (for example during orientation or for clinical preparation or participating in a workshop on or off campus), all students must wear a laboratory coat, name pin, and picture ID over appropriate attire. Appropriate attire is considered business casual (jeans, athletic wear, miniskirts, tank tops, mid-bearing shirts, leggings, thigh thigh-high boots, spiked heels, and sneakers are prohibited).

Changes to dress code will be communicated by the Department Chair, Undergraduate Program Coordinator, Clinical Coordinator, and/or clinical faculty.

## **V. TRANSPORTATION**

A variety of clinical experiences are necessary to meet the educational needs of nursing students in practice areas. Clinical placement is based on course objectives and the availability of clinical sites. Students may be required to travel anywhere within the state of Connecticut when attending clinical experiences. Clinical sites may change prior to the beginning of semester and or during the semester. This information is communicated to students through WCSU email. Students are responsible for checking emails during breaks and holidays a minimum of 3 times a week. Students are responsible for their own transportation and any parking or gasoline costs.

## **VI. ASSIGNMENTS, EXAMINATIONS, GRADING AND REPORTING OF GRADES**

### **A. Assignments**

1. Students will be provided with the course syllabus at the beginning of each course.
2. All course assignments must be submitted by the designated due date to meet course requirements.
3. Faculty reserve the right to retain papers and assignments. Students are encouraged to make copies of all papers prior to submission to the faculty. The copiers in the Department of Nursing are not available for student use. Printers are available in the library and computer labs. There are scanners and other devices available in the library and computer labs.
4. Student papers and other written assignments are due on the date specified by the faculty unless specific arrangements have been made by the student with the faculty member prior to the due date of the assignment. Refer to the course syllabus for specific consequences.

### **B. Examinations**

1. University policies concerning examination procedures (including laboratory practicum exams) will be strictly enforced. (See WCSU Student Handbook). For specifics about examinations please see the course syllabus.
2. Examinations may be delivered in either an electronic or paper format. Students are not permitted to keep exams or to copy test questions and answers. Students may review their own exams at the discretion of the faculty. Students are prohibited from recording in any format digital, audio or picture/video lecture or exam reviews. Doing so is considered academic dishonesty and may result in removal from the program.
3. Dictionaries of any kind that translate words into other languages are not permitted during exams.
4. Any activity related to recording or sharing of content including Artificial Intelligence (AI) or ChatGPT for answers on written or electronic exams/quizzes, practicum or computer-generated exams will be considered a violation of academic honesty policy.
5. Before students receive course accommodations for a disability related need in a nursing class, the students must make an appointment with the AccessAbility Office. The AccessAbility staff will provide documentation about the specific accommodation to course faculty. While students do not have to disclose their disability, students are encouraged to speak with their instructor about specific accommodations, or other concerns as soon as possible after the course begins. It is at the discretion of the Department of Nursing concerning accommodations in a clinical setting. The Undergraduate Program Coordinator and Department Chair must be made aware of Accommodations in this setting. Accommodation requests must be requested each semester.
6. All students must perform in the expected standard time allotment for NUR 201: Health Assessment Practicum Exam or NUR 255: Clinical Nursing Practice II Practicum Exam. Students are encouraged to access laboratory resources prior to

practicum exams to ensure an optimal outcome. Failure in Practicum Examination will result in a clinical failure. Clinical failure will result in course failure and the student may not progress to the next course.

### C. Grading

#### **Grading Policy:**

The Department of Nursing has adopted the following grading policy to be implemented as of Fall 2004:

A	=	100-92
A-	=	91- 89
B+	=	88-86
B	=	85-83
B-	=	82-80
C+	=	79-77
C	=	76-74
C-	=	73-71
D+	=	70-68
D	=	67-64
D-	=	63-61
F	=	60 or below

A summary grade of C or better (74 and above) is required in both written work (e.g. care plans, projects, logs etc.) and objective testing (e.g. tests, quizzes, essay exam, etc.) with each computed independently before the final grade is calculated. Therefore, achieving a summary grade of less than a C in either component will result in a failure in the course.

Students receiving an “Incomplete” are referred to the Student Handbook, University policy governing incomplete grades. Course withdrawal policies are in accordance with University policy. Please refer to the Department of Nursing Website and see Undergraduate Catalog-Nursing Program Requirements concerning retention in nursing program. There may be instances that result in a Withdrawal and or Incomplete grade where a student may not progress in the sequence of nursing classes and may need to reapply to the program.

## **VII. CONTINUATION IN THE NURSING PROGRAM**

### A. Medication Calculation Exam

- As a requirement of the Department of Nursing, students in the traditional undergraduate program are required to pass the NUR 105 Med/Math Exam in the Fall semester sophomore year. Any students re-entering the sophomore sequence of class in the spring semester must take the Med/Math Exam.



- The exam will be given during the final exam period for NUR 105. Students must pass the Med/Math Exam with a grade of 85% or higher. Students who are not successful on the first exam have an additional opportunity to take the exam. If upon the second try, the student does not pass the exam, the student will not continue in the nursing program. If the student is readmitted to the nursing program, he/she will be required to take the NUR 105 Med-math exam the following fall offered during finals' week. The student will have two chances to pass this exam. If the student is unsuccessful on both tries, the student will no longer qualify to continue in the nursing program.

## **B. Academic Standards**

- To graduate with a major in nursing, an overall achievement of 2.5 GPA must be maintained. A student can reapply once to the generic program. If readmitted and the GPA drops below 2.5 again, they will be deemed ineligible to reapply.
- The student is responsible for monitoring his or her own academic and clinical performance/progress and must seek consultation with the instructor/academic advisor if unusual issues/situations exist which may affect academic or clinical performance. Students are expected to be an active participant in their academic and clinical progress and are responsible for following through with recommendations made by clinical or course faculty.
- A temporary grade of Incomplete (INC) is recorded when a student has a documented reason for not meeting a requirement at the end of the semester at the discretion of the faculty member. The student should discuss the reason for the incomplete status with the course instructor. If the incomplete is granted the student must complete the course requirements before the next semester begins. The course grade will automatically be converted to a failure in the course (F) if the student does not complete the work prior to the next semester. Any student who is granted an incomplete will not be allowed to progress in the program until the incomplete is resolved and the next progression course is offered.

## **C. Academic/Clinical Warning Course Failure**

The following occurrences result in Academic/Clinical Warning status:

- An academic warning may be issued at any time during the course when a student does not meet the course objectives, professional nursing behaviors, or clinical competency requirement. If clinical onboarding paperwork is not completed prior to the start of the semester, students may receive an academic warning. Students will be notified in writing and a plan of remediation will be outlined. The Department Chair and student's advisor will be notified.
- A clinical warning may be issued at any time during the course when students are

not meeting course/clinical objectives or exhibiting professional nursing behaviors. Students will be notified in writing and a plan for remediation will be outlined. The faculty member will notify the Undergraduate Program Coordinator, the Department Chair, and the student's advisor.

- A student who receives a clinical or academic warning will meet with the Department Chair or Undergraduate Program Coordinator to discuss the circumstance of the warning and remediation plan.
- An Academic/clinical warning will resolve once the student satisfactorily completes the remediation plan.
- A failure in the clinical component of a course is a failure in the course and requires students to repeat both the theory and clinical portion of the course.
- If a student is unsuccessful in one nursing course, the student may have the opportunity to reapply to the nursing program. Readmission to the nursing program is not guaranteed. If a student fails two nursing courses, the student is ineligible to reapply to the nursing program. Similarly, if a student withdraws from one nursing course, the student must reapply to the nursing program. If the student withdraws from two nursing courses, the student will be ineligible to reapply to the nursing program.

#### **D. Academic Dismissal & Retention**

1. Conditions under which students are subject to academic suspension & probation are found in the WCSU Undergraduate Catalog (<https://catalogs.wcsu.edu/ugrad/>)
2. The following occurrences will result in academic dismissal from the Department of Nursing:
  - Grade (below 'C') in any two nursing courses or the same nursing course twice.
  - Original grades will be used to determine students' academic status for purposes of probation, progression, and dismissal in the Nursing Program. Replacement grades will not be considered for the above purposes.
  - Students receiving academic dismissal from the Department of Nursing are ineligible to apply for readmission. The Department Chair will notify the student in writing.

#### **Retention (Undergraduate Catalog-Nursing Page)**

1. To remain in the Nursing program, students must earn at least a "C" grade in all courses with a nursing designation plus BIO 215, and HPX 205.
2. Students must obtain a score of >85% or better in NUR 105 to progress in the nursing sequence.
3. Students must fulfill academic requirements and show evidence of

meeting the behavioral objectives (cognitive, psychomotor and affective) of preparation for professional nursing as described and distributed in each nursing course with a NUR 200, 300, and 400 designation.

4. A student who receives a grade of “C-” or lower in a nursing course, whose cumulative grade point average has dropped below 2.50, who has withdrawn from a NUR 200, 300, or 400 level nursing course, who has taken a leave of absence from the Nursing program (whether medical or otherwise), or who has withdrawn from the Nursing program must apply for readmission to the Nursing program. Faculty reserve the right to determine student’s eligibility on an individualized basis. The student may be readmitted to the program. contingent upon the student meeting criteria for readmission.
5. Any student who has reapplied to the nursing program and been readmitted and then subsequently withdraws or fails, will not be readmitted.
6. Students who demonstrate an unsafe level of patient care will not be permitted to continue in the clinical area.
7. Under provisions of Public Act 86-365, students whose ability to function is impaired or who have engaged in unethical or illegal acts, or whose behavior does not conform to accepted standards of the Nursing profession may jeopardize their eligibility for obtaining or retaining professional nurse licensure in the State of Connecticut. (A copy of the act with explanatory material is available for review in the department office.) Such conduct or behavior may also be grounds for disciplinary action, including suspension or dismissal from the program.
8. Students admitted to the traditional nursing program must follow the course sequencing outlined in the program of study.

#### **E. Withdrawal/ Leave of Absence (LOA)**

Any student in the Department of Nursing has the right to withdraw from the nursing program. A terminal interview with the student’s faculty advisor and the Undergraduate Program Coordinator/ Department Chair must be arranged by the withdrawing student. There is no guarantee that a student who has withdrawn will be readmitted to the nursing program.

Students who withdraw from any of the undergraduate programs (Traditional or RN- BSN) or take a semester or longer leave of absence (LOA) and wish to return to the nursing program, must request readmission within one academic year of withdrawal/LOA. Students must complete a request to return form. Readmission is not guaranteed and is dependent upon the students’ potential for success, current availability of learning opportunities and department resources. Students must follow the designated plan for readmission, including demonstration of clinical competency. If more than two academic years have passed since withdrawal from the Nursing program, the student will be required to reapply and, at the discretion of the nursing faculty, repeat courses.

Refer to the WCSU Undergraduate Catalog and Student Handbook for the policy on course withdrawal and late course withdrawal. A course withdrawal after the University withdrawal date may be granted for extenuating circumstances. A potential or pending course failure is not justification for a late course

withdrawal.

#### **F. Academic Honesty/Dishonesty/BOR/CSCU Code of Conduct**

Academic honesty is the cornerstone of higher education. An honest approach to one's work is the only approach in the laboratory, research, or in examinations. Cheating of any kind is, and must be, condemned by all members of a college community.

The Department of Nursing adheres to the Academic Honesty Policy and the BOR/WCSU Code of Conduct.

The academic honesty policy is located at  
<https://www.wcsu.edu/faculty-handbook/policies-pertaining-to-students/academic-honesty-policy/>

The BOR/CSCU Student Code of Conduct is located at  
<https://www.wcsu.edu/judicial-affairs/wp-content/uploads/sites/173/2020/08/2.1-StudentCodeofConduct.pdf>

#### **G. Social Media**

Social media is defined as a method of communicating electronically through use of chat rooms, blogs, shared? sites, social networking sites, video or web broadcasting sites and other online forums of any kind. Electronic communications are not considered a secure method for transmitting confidential or private information. Examples of social media include but are not limited to: Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, blogs, Flickr, YouTube, Wikipedia, Podcasts, Myspace, Allnurses.com, Instagram, or RSS feeds, snap chat, what's app, etc. Please review NCSBN Social Media Brochure (<https://www.ncsbn.org/brochures-and-posters/nurses-guide-to-the-use-of-social-media>).

Improper use of social media by nursing students may violate state and federal laws established to protect confidentiality and can result in both civil and criminal penalties, including fines and possible jail time.

- No texting, talking or cell phone use in clinical areas or classroom/lab without permission of faculty. Cell phones are only allowed for information gathering related to clinical situations (if permitted by faculty or agency) during clinical, college laboratory, or classroom time. Otherwise, cell phones need to be turned off.
- Video recording or pictures of patients/clients/clinical sites are prohibited without written permission of patient, faculty and institution, or clinical site.
- No video recording or pictures of professors or fellow students for personal or social

media use without written permission of subjects.

- Clinical agencies/sites may have further restrictions that must be adhered to online comments by nursing students regarding faculty, peers, coworkers, and clinical sites, even if posted after clinical or didactic hours may constitute lateral violence or misuse of social media. Lateral violence includes disruptive behaviors of intimidation and bullying which is detrimental to the Department of Nursing faculty and students and may result in legal action against the nursing student. Nursing students represent the WCSU in a fair and positive manner and need to be aware that social media sites are public, and information accessed can be traced back to the sender even after they have been deleted. Nothing posted or transmitted by social media is private.

#### Consequences

Violation of the above stated guidelines will result in departmental, university or other disciplinary action.

### **VIII. GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE**

The Student Handbook outlines procedural information for student grievances including grade appeal.

### **IX. PROGRAM EVALUATION/PROGRAM OUTCOMES**

Students are expected to participate in methods of assessment/evaluation of program outcomes.

### **X. PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATION /LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES/VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES**

- National Student Nurses' Association (<https://www.nsna.org>)
- WCSU Student Nurses' Association (<https://www.instagram.com/wcsu.sna/>)  
This organization's membership is open to pre-nursing & nursing students attending Western Connecticut State University who are interested in nursing as a major or are currently enrolled in the nursing program. Membership requires payment of dues to the National Student Nurses' Association which automatically makes the student a member of the Connecticut Student Nurses' Association. Western Connecticut State University Student Nurses' Association functions under a Constitution and Bylaws in concert with the National Student Nurses' Association and is associated with the Student Activity Program at Western. Students are encouraged to join and maintain membership in WCSU SNA and NSNA as a beginning professional activity. Students can bring their concerns to the Student Nurses' Association meetings. There is faculty representation at this meeting. Concerns can be brought back to the faculty and Department Chair.
- Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society
- Kappa Alpha Chapter

Sigma Theta Tau is an International Nursing Honor Society. Students completing their junior year as traditional nursing students or RNs, and Graduate students who have completed one-half of the nursing components are invited to join the organization if they have met the following criteria: a 3.5 G.P.A., (rank not lower than the highest 35 percent in their class in scholarship) and meet the professional standards of the Nursing Program. Membership includes graduate and undergraduate nursing students, alumni, faculty, and community nursing leaders.

- The Department of Nursing recruits student volunteers for on and off campus activities to represent the program. There are several volunteer opportunities throughout the year where students may participate.
- In NUR 255: Clinical Nursing Practice II, students who demonstrate strong communication and academic ability may be asked to volunteer to become a Student Leader in college lab.
- In NUR 374: Leadership and Management in Contemporary Nursing Practice, students who volunteer and exhibit leadership qualities may be asked to become a Peer Tutor. The Peer Tutor serves as tutors for students in the nursing program.
- Students are encouraged to put their volunteer work on their resumes.

## **XI. STUDENT REPRESENTATION ON COMMITTEES**

There are Nursing committees where it may be deemed appropriate for student representation.

## **XII. AWARDS AND SCHOLARSHIPS**

- Awards, specific to the Department of Nursing, are given to recognize exceptional student achievement. Awards are presented annually in the spring.
- Student scholarships may become available for students in the nursing program. Students are encouraged to review <https://wcsu.academicworks.com/> periodically for scholarship announcements.
- Connecticut Center for Nursing Workforce (CCNW) annually requests peer nominations for the Peer Recognition Award, which is awarded at the Annual RN Student Day.
- Opportunities may be available at American Association of Colleges of Nursing. <https://www.aacnnursing.org/foundation-for-academic-nursing/scholarships> and <https://www.aacnnursing.org/students/financial-aid>