

# RN-BSN PROGRAM STUDENT HANDBOOK



*Developing professional nurse leaders*

Missouri Western State University College of Professional Studies

Department of Nursing

2023-2024

Department of Nursing  
Murphy Hall 309  
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Additional Nursing Program information may be located at:

[www.missouriwestern.edu/nursing/](http://www.missouriwestern.edu/nursing/)



# WELCOME

Welcome to Missouri Western State University's RN-BSN Program. This student handbook has been developed to assist you in successfully completing your baccalaureate degree in nursing at Missouri Western State University. You are responsible for reading the material carefully and discussing any questions you might have with a faculty member or RN-BSN Program Coordinator. You are responsible for complying with the policies as stated in the Missouri Western State University RN-BSN Student Handbook and specific course syllabi.

Nursing Students are expected to read the regulations and policies in the University Undergraduate Catalog, University Student Handbook, and RN-BSN Student Handbook and to conform to them. It is the student's responsibility for knowing and abiding by the regulations and policies, and for meeting the requirements for a nursing degree.

In keeping with the requirements of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 in regard to sex discrimination and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 in regard to handicap discrimination as well as other applicable federal and state laws, Missouri Western State University follows a policy of nondiscrimination and equal opportunity in regard to all employment practices and to all educational programs and activities including financial aid, recruitment, admission, housing, and placement. Inquiries regarding the application of these laws may be submitted to the Title IX Coordinator, Blum 231, (816) 271-4557, [titleix@missouriwestern.edu](mailto:titleix@missouriwestern.edu) OR the accessibility resource center director, Eder 201, (816) 271-4330 [arc@missouriwestern.edu](mailto:arc@missouriwestern.edu).

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**Missouri Western State University**  
**College of Science & Health**  
**Department of Nursing**

*Developing professional nurse leaders*

**Mission Statement**

The Missouri Western State University Department of Nursing is committed to the development of students as individuals and leaders striving for excellence in inter-professional practice and the promotion of healthy communities.

**Nursing Philosophy**

As an integral part of Missouri Western State University, the Department of Nursing supports the mission, goals and policies of the University and the College of Professional Studies. To master the discipline of nursing and the increasingly complex knowledge, skills and attitudes required to deliver safe, quality care, a broad-based baccalaureate education including theoretical and applied learning are essential for generalist nursing education. Graduate education develops nurses for advanced nursing practice roles. Recognizing the complexity of organizations, financing and delivery of health care, the faculty are committed to supporting ongoing program/curricular evaluation and adaptation to meet the demands of the evolving health care system. The faculty believe that professional nursing practice is based upon the integration of the concepts related to person, health, environment and nursing. Systems thinking guides the integration of these concepts into the nursing process to promote a holistic nursing care.

**Person**

The person is viewed as a unique being with intrinsic worth and dignity, whose wholeness is more than the sum of his/her biophysical, psychosocial, cognitive, and social components. A person is a complex open system who is in constant interaction with an internal and external environment. The person or designee is able to choose among alternative actions; set goals; make decisions based on perceptions, values, and needs. Diversity among persons is valued and respected. Professional nurses respect the right of self-determination in making informed health care decisions.

**Health**

Health is a dynamic holistic process in which individuals and/or groups interact with, biophysical, psychosocial, cognitive and social stimuli in order to achieve maximum potential. All individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities have the potential for both health and illness. The goal of nursing is to promote health, prevent illness, support disease management, improve quality of life and support end-of-life decisions and care. Environment The environment is the aggregate of conditions which influence individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities. The health care environment varies from basic to complex and 5 highly technological. Nurses manage, monitor and manipulate the environment to foster health and promote safe, quality care. Nurses use informatics to support decision-making and improve outcomes.

**Nursing**

“Nursing is the protection, promotion, and optimization of health and abilities, prevention of illness and injury, facilitation of healing, alleviation of suffering through the diagnosis and treatment of human response, and advocacy in the care of individuals, families, groups, communities, and populations.” (ANA Nursing Scope and Standards of Practice, 2015, p. 1). Standards-based practice underpins the implementation of the nursing process and is focused on maintaining, restoring or promoting optimal health. Application of the nursing process requires critical thinking, nursing judgments and competent

nursing actions. The nursing process is implemented through a collaborative relationship that involves interpersonal communication, mutually defined goals and desired outcomes. Professional nursing integrates multiple role expectations including leader, provider, designer, manager and coordinator of care. The professional nurse promotes, participates in and uses research as a part of a commitment to high quality care and evidence-based practice. Nursing is an integral part of the inter-professional health care system which has the responsibility to provide accessible, cost-effective, safe, quality care. As such, professional nurses must possess effective organizational and teamwork skills; strong communication skills; a service orientation; an ethic of professional and social responsibility; cost awareness and accountability for clinical outcomes; commitment to continuous improvement of health care and competency in population-based care.

**In addition, the faculty holds the following beliefs related to baccalaureate education of student nurses:**

The faculty are committed to creating and sustaining reciprocal partnerships with a variety of clinical practice settings wherein mutually beneficial relationships support both student clinical learning experiences and benefit the delivery setting.

Learning is a life-long process of developing individual potential through a spirit of inquiry and self-motivation. Learning involves cognitive, affective and psychomotor components and development of critical and creative thinking. The learner is accountable for his/her learning and is expected to demonstrate responsibility for independence and self-direction, building upon prior learning. Faculty have accountability for facilitating student learning by developing, implementing and evaluating quality learning experiences based on current research and practice. Faculty hold students accountable for prior learning

**Missouri Western State University  
College of Science & Health  
Department of Nursing  
BSN Program Objectives**

| <b>BSN Program Objectives:</b>   |
|--|
| 1. Demonstrates and advocates for standards-based professional practice.   |
| 2. Uses clinical reasoning and clinical judgement to anticipate a variety of consequences.   |
| 3. Adapts effective interpersonal, therapeutic professional, organizational, written and electronic communication as designer, manager, coordinator of care. |
| 4. Demonstrates clinical reasoning and judgement in the systematic, holistic, and focused assessment.  |
| 5. Performs, teaches, delegates, and supervises psychomotor skills with safety and competency.   |
| 6. Integrates strategies for health promotion, risk reduction, and disease prevention for quality improvement processes                                      |
| 7. Designs, manages and coordinates patient-centered nursing care.   |
| 8. Evaluates the use of information and technology to communicate, manage knowledge, mitigate error and support decision making.                             |
| 9. Collaborates effectively as a member and leader of the inter-professional team.   |
| 10. Evaluates the effect of health care policy, finance and regulatory environments as designer, manager and coordinator of care.                            |
| 11. Uses theory and evidence-based knowledge from nursing and the sciences in the provision of care.   |

## **Nursing Course Descriptions**

The descriptions for all courses required for the completion of the nursing degree are in the Missouri Western State University Undergraduate Catalog. They can also be found online at <https://www.missouriwestern.edu/catalog/>.

## **Faculty**

Members of the faculty are available to students for consultation concerning curriculum and many other matters during office hours and by appointment. Nursing faculty serve as advisors to students enrolled in the nursing major. Nursing students are encouraged to have regular contact with their faculty advisor regarding their progress in the nursing program. A complete roster of the nursing faculty and their educational qualifications is available online at [www.missouriwestern.edu/nursing/](http://www.missouriwestern.edu/nursing/).

Faculty may be contacted by emailing or by calling the Department of Nursing administrative assistant at (816) 271-4415; fax (816) 271-5849. Faculty contact information is available on the Department of Nursing website at [www.missouriwestern.edu/nursing/](http://www.missouriwestern.edu/nursing/). The Department of Nursing is located in Murphy Hall, Room 309.

## **Student Nurses' Code of Conduct**

Student nurses are bound by the American Nurses Association Code of Ethics. A code of ethics is an integral part of nursing and serves three major purposes: 1) outlines the ethical obligations and duties of each nurse; 2) provides a nonnegotiable standard; 3) makes a commitment to individuals, families, colleagues, the profession, and society. Therefore, the Department of Nursing has adopted the following Code of Conduct to which all nursing students will be held accountable. The Code of Conduct is derived from the principles in the ANA Code of Ethics and adapted from the National Student Nurses Association.

1. Academic honesty is required in all academic endeavors. Violations of academic honesty include any instance of plagiarism, cheating, seeking credit for another's work, falsifying documents or academic records, or any other fraudulent activity.
2. Advocate for the rights of all clients.
3. Maintain confidentiality of clinical health information and information from health care agencies.
4. Act to ensure the safety of self, clients, and others.
5. Provide quality care for the client in a timely, compassionate, and professional manner.
6. Communicate in a respectful, truthful, timely, and accurate manner.
7. Promote the highest level of moral and ethical principles and accept accountability for all actions.
8. Promote excellence in nursing by encouraging lifelong learning and professional development.
9. Treat others with respect and promote an environment that respects human rights, values, and cultural and spiritual beliefs.
10. Collaborate with the academic faculty and/or clinical staff to enhance learning and practice outcomes.
11. Refrain from performing any technique or procedure for which the student has not been adequately educated.
12. Refrain from any deliberate action or omission in the academic or clinical setting that creates and unnecessary risk to the client, self, or others.



13. Abstain from the use of alcoholic beverages or any substance that impairs judgment in the academic or clinical setting.
14. Strive to achieve and maintain an optimal level of personal health.
15. Uphold school policies and regulations related to academic and clinical performance, reserving the right to appeal according to university policy.

### **Standards-Based Nursing Practice**

All nursing students are held accountable for the same standards and ethics of practice as that of a registered professional nurse. The *American Nurses Association Code of Ethics for Nurses* provides guidance for conduct and relationships in carrying out nursing responsibilities consistent with the ethical obligations of the profession and quality of nursing care. *ANA Scope* and *Standards of Nursing Practice* are published standards of care established by the nursing profession and are continuously updated. They serve as guidelines for nursing practice to ensure proper, consistent, and high-quality nursing care to all members of society. In addition, the AACN Baccalaureate Essentials, QSEN Competencies and agency-specific policies and procedures serve as standards for the BSN program.

*The Missouri Nurse Practice Act* defines nursing practice and establishes standards for nurses in the state. It is the most definitive legal statute or legislative act regulating nursing practice. *The Nurse Practice Act* provides a framework for the court on which to base decisions when determining whether a nurse has breached a standard of care. Students are required to purchase the *ANA Code of Ethics* and the *ANA Scope and Standards of Nursing Practice* and to download the *Missouri Nurse Practice Act* through [www.pr.mo.gov/nursing.asp](http://www.pr.mo.gov/nursing.asp). If a student has questions about legal scope of practice, licensing requirements, or nursing education, they are encouraged to contact the:

Missouri State Board of Nursing 3605 Missouri Boulevard, P.O. Box 656, Jefferson City, MO 65102

Website: [www.pr.mo.gov/nursing.asp](http://www.pr.mo.gov/nursing.asp)

### **Academic Advisement**

Students will be assigned a nursing faculty advisor. The student and the advisor will complete a major declaration form after acceptance into the program. Students are accountable for understanding and completing degree requirements as specified on the major declaration form. Any substitutions to program requirements must be approved by the advisor and the Chairperson. Students must meet with their advisor each semester during the enrollment period to plan their course of study

### **Academic Honesty**

Honesty in the classroom or clinical area is required. Cheating, plagiarism, or knowingly furnishing false information is unprofessional behavior and may result in dismissal from the program. See the *MWSU Student Handbook*

### **Attendance**

Timely, regular attendance and preparation for class/clinical is an essential part of professional behavior and

academic work. The responsibility for attendance rests with the student. Faculty expect students to attend all scheduled classes of the courses in which they are enrolled. Regular class attendance is considered at least bi-weekly participation in online activities and timely completion of assignments. Determinations related to make-up coursework or examinations will be based on academic standing, reason for missed coursework and feasibility to obtain required course content and/or clinical experiences. Faculty “are not required to prepare or give a make-up test. Consideration will be given to students in the case of genuine (documented) illness, emergency, or when acting as a representative of the University” (See the University Policy Guide, Instructional Policies, Section B). Any student who is absent for clinical or a class in which an exam is scheduled will be required to meet with the lead instructor for the course. Any student who misses 2 or more clinical days or an exam during the nursing program will be required to meet with the RN-BSN program coordinator. A conduct report will be completed and a statement from a physician may be required. A pattern of clinical or exam day absences or late assignments may result in course failure and/or program dismissal (see Management of Unsafe/Unprofessional behavior Policy).

### **Clinical Behavior**

Students in the nursing program at Missouri Western State University are expected to practice according to the standards set by the profession. *ANA Scope and Standards of Nursing Practice* (Care and Professional Performance) and the American Nurses Association *Code of Ethics* for Nurses document these expectations. Students should be aware that a behavior that deviates significantly from these standards and that is unsafe, illegal, or unprofessional may result in a recommendation for dismissal from the program. While a single incident may be serious enough to warrant an immediate recommendation for dismissal, a pattern of less serious unprofessional behaviors will also result in a recommendation for dismissal.

If a student’s behavior/performance is believed to be an immediate and severe threat to patient or public safety and welfare, he/she may be removed from the clinical area, followed by a written recommendation for dismissal from the clinical course. Dismissal from the nursing program may be recommended (*See Management of Unprofessional or Unsafe Behavior*).

### **Communication**

Faculty in the nursing program value open, direct, honest, and respectful communication. Students are expected to communicate openly, honestly and respectfully with peers, faculty, health care agency staff, patients, and families. Students should check their MWSU email at least twice a week for updates and communication from the university and faculty. If concerns with a course arise, the student is expected to discuss these concerns openly and honestly with the appropriate faculty member. The student may also seek guidance from their academic advisor and/or the RN-BSN Coordinator, if necessary.

### **Compliance with Clinical Agency Requirements**

RN-BSN students seeking clinical capstone placement outside of their employing agency, must complete all pre-admission and annual requirements as described in this handbook, and outlined in the Clinical Compliance Checklist (found in the Nursing Information and Clinical Expectations Resource Canvas page) before being allowed in clinical areas. Students will also need to sign the *Release of Information* form which will allow the Department of Nursing to release information to clinical agencies. Failure on the part of the student to satisfactorily complete these requirements will result in the student being denied placement in the clinical agency and may result in course failure. Note: Clinical agency requirements may change after the student begins the nursing program. It is

expected that students will remain compliant with all compliance requirements throughout the duration of the nursing program.

### **Computer Literacy**

Students must have an MWSU email account and have basic computer skills including the ability to: Use the learning management system (Canvas) for course preparation and completion of assignments, navigate the MWSU website, type and edit a Word document or Google Doc., attach a document within an email, scan and upload documents, and use IBM SPSS Software.

### **Confidentiality**

A strict ethical and legal (HIPAA) obligation exists for nurses to respect client confidentiality and not to reveal information without the client's consent. Confidentiality of medical information on patients and information regarding the conduct of health care agency personnel must be honored. In order to practice in the clinical environment, students are required to sign a confidentiality statement for the university to hold privileged information in confidence. Violation of confidentiality may be reflected in course grade or may result in dismissal from the program (see Dismissal Policy.)

### **Health Information Portability and Accountability Act**

The Health Information Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) established standards for health care providers in the protection of patient health information. Private patient information must be kept confidential and can only be disclosed or used for specific purposes related to an individual's care. In order to practice in the clinical environment, students are required to sign a Confidentiality Statement for the university.

### **Conduct Report**

Student behavior that is not consistent with professional standards (ANA Scope and Standards of Nursing Practice, ANA Code of Ethics, MWSU Student Code of Conduct, Nurse Practice Act, and HIPAA) will be reflected in evaluation/grading and may be grounds for dismissal from the program.

Conduct Reports should be initiated anytime the instructor deems it appropriate to document a student's performance in writing for their permanent file. This serves as a tracking mechanism for patterns of behavior as well as documentation of student acknowledgment of classroom and/or clinical concerns.

The conduct report includes:

- The event
- Plan for improvement/correction.
- Consequences for repeat behavior and/or failure to meet expectations of plan.
- Timelines for expected improvement.
- Signature of faculty member with date.
- Signature of student with date.

In addition, the Early Intervention process may be initiated through the Student Affairs department (see Early Intervention Policy in University Student Handbook).

### **BLS – Basic Life Support**

Completion of basic life support (BLS for healthcare professional) from the American Heart Association is required prior to beginning the sequence of clinical nursing courses. The student will upload documentation of

course completion of BLS for Healthcare Professional in Project Concert. It is the student's responsibility to keep their BLS updated every two years. The Heartsaver course will **NOT** be accepted.

### **Criminal Background Disclosure**

In order to comply with terms of affiliation agreements between Missouri Western State University Department of Nursing and clinical agencies, any student who is to have contact with patients (or residents) must provide disclosure regarding his or her criminal background, and/or be subject to possible criminal background check by state agencies. Additionally, state registration and/or licensing applications may require such disclosure.

Prior to placement or assignment of a student with clinical agencies, the student must provide the Department of Nursing with a criminal record review consistent with agency guidelines (information available on NICER canvas page). Criminal history includes any conviction or plea of guilty to a misdemeanor or felony charge. In addition, the University must make an inquiry to the Missouri Department of Social Services as to whether the student is listed on the employee disqualification list, as provided in the §660.315 RSMo. This background check is conducted prior to starting clinical courses and should be done through a designated vendor (See NICER) or through the RN's current employment agency. Results of the background check are sent to the School designee and shall be confidential. Prior to placement or assignment of a student with a clinical agency, the University shall certify, in writing, to the requesting clinical agency, that such student does not appear on the "employee disqualification list" referenced above, and is not disqualified from having contact with patients or residents pursuant to §660.317.6 RSMo and to specific clinical agency requirements.

**During the program any criminal or legal action that may impact clinical placement, licensure application, or is a violation of the student code of conduct must be reported to the RN-BSN Program Coordinator as soon as possible.**

### **Drug Testing**

RN to BSN Students who are attending capstone clinical in a location outside of their place of employment are required to complete drug screening prior to clinical placement at their own expense. The purpose of this policy is to meet clinical compliance requirements set by our clinical partners. Drug testing will be conducted at an approved lab contracted by the Department of Nursing.

Students are required to use the process identified in the NICER Canvas page to complete the drug test. Results will be reviewed by the RN-BSN Program Coordinator. The Chairperson of the nursing department will be notified of any result other than negative. If a student tests positive for a tested substance, the student's ability to attend clinical may be affected and could result in course failure and dismissal from the program. A student with a positive drug test may reapply after one year. Failure to demonstrate a negative drug screen by the designated date using the established process will result in dismissal from the nursing program.

**Tests Required** – Substances tested include: Amphetamines, Barbiturates, Benzodiazepines, Cocaine Metabolites, Marijuana Metabolites, Methadone, MDA (SASS), MDMA (Ecstasy), Opiates, Phencyclidine, Propoxyphene, Methaqualone, Oxycodone, Oxymorphone

**Medical exemption process** – MWSU Department of Nursing recognizes that some banned substances are used for legitimate medical purposes. Documentation from the student's prescribing provider will be requested by the Medical Review Officer of the drug screening vendor if a positive test occurs. The Medical Review Officer will confirm medical need and render the test negative, as appropriate.

Dilute Test Results – A dilute test will require retesting at the student’s expense. If a student receives 3 consecutive dilute test results, admission to the nursing program will be rescinded. The student may reapply after one year.

**Retesting** – The MWSU Department of Nursing may request a student to be retested for cause at any point, without notice, during the nursing program at the student’s expense. This request will be based on reasonable suspicion of substance use or abuse. Reasonable suspicion may include but is not limited to:

- Direct observation of substance use or abuse
- Observation of unusual or erratic behavior
- Observation of physical symptoms consistent with substance use or abuse
- Arrest or conviction for a drug related offense

Documentation of cause by reasonable suspicion will be documented by the reporting individual to include relevant details and forwarded to the Chairperson of the nursing department. The Chairperson will conduct an investigation and determine whether cause exists for retesting. The Chairperson will make a determination regarding the student’s continuation in coursework while awaiting the results. Retesting may include, but is not limited to, the substances listed above.

A student who tests positive, receives 3 dilute test results, or whose results are anything other than negative will be subject to discipline, up to and including dismissal from the nursing program. Failure to obtain testing upon request will result in dismissal from the nursing program.

**Confidentiality** – Every effort will be taken to ensure confidentiality of drug testing results. However, the MWSU Department of Nursing reserves the right to notify University officials and clinical partners who have a need to know such results. Results may be used for administrative hearings and court cases, and may be sent to state and/or federal agencies as required by applicable law.

**Appeal of Test Results** – A student may appeal a test result by submitting a written request within 5 business days of notification of the result. The appeal should be submitted, in writing, to the Chairperson of the nursing department. The student may request a second test to be performed on the original specimen at a SAMHSA certified laboratory of choice at his/her own cost. Transport of the specimen should follow standard laboratory protocols and the results should be submitted by the laboratory directly to the Chairperson. The Chairperson may request a third test on the original specimen to be conducted at a SAMHSA certified laboratory at the school’s cost

### **Immunization and Health Insurance Requirements**

RN to BSN Students who are attending capstone clinical in a location outside of their place of employment are required to complete immunization prior to clinical placement at their own expense. The student is required to furnish documentation of required immunizations, prior to the beginning of the sequence of clinical nursing courses. Documentation of immunizations or laboratory evidence of immunity is required according to standards established by the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and as outlined in the Clinical Orientation Manual ([www.kchealthcareers.com](http://www.kchealthcareers.com)). A list of required immunizations is provided in the Nursing Information and Clinical Expectations Resource Canvas page. Because of the nature of the profession, nursing students may be exposed to certain health risks during the course of their clinical practice. The majority of these risks can be eliminated or minimized by following established standards.

Students should be aware that neither the school nor clinical agencies provide health insurance for students. Each individual student is responsible for his/her own health care. Injuries sustained by the student in the clinical setting are NOT covered by either the school or the clinical facility. Students are required to maintain health

insurance coverage.

Documentation of immunizations and health insurance must be submitted to the RN-BSN Program Coordinator. Students who fail to submit all required documentation will not be permitted to attend clinical experiences, resulting in a negative impact on the course grade.

### **Personal Accountability for Risk Management**

Because of the nature of various clinical situations, the risk of harm or injury to the student exists. The student must sign an *Assumption of Risk Waiver and Release Agreement* form prior to laboratory practice or clinical experience. If a student is injured during clinical or laboratory experience; the student is responsible for seeking medical care and assuming the financial obligation for that care.

### **Professional Appearance**

Professional appearance promotes an image of a competent and knowledgeable individual. In addition to the requirements in this policy, MWSU students must comply with individual dress code requirements set forth by the clinical agency in which they work for or are placed at for clinicals. Faculty members are responsible for ensuring that the dress code policy is followed and will be the first line of communication with the student if violations occur. Violations to the Professional Appearance Policy may warrant a Conduct Report and possible removal from clinical (see Conduct Report).

**Uniform** - It will be clean and in good repair. The hem of the pants will not touch the floor. Undergarments should not be visible. Cell phones are not permitted in the patient care or lab environment. Wrist watches should be free of embellishments and gem stones as this poses an infection control hazard.

**Hair and Personal Hygiene** – It is expected that students practice good professional appearance. Hair will be clean and facial hair will be clean and manicured close to the face. Facial hair will not extend beyond the mandible or chin. Hats will not be allowed.

**Artificial Nails** - Fingernails will be no longer than the tops of fingertips. No artificial nails, nail polish, gel nails, nail wraps or any nail adornment will be allowed.

**Jewelry and Piercings** – One ring per hand is allowed. Facial piercings will be limited to one piercing or button in each of the lower lobes of the ear. Earrings or gauges will be round and no larger than 6 mm in diameter. Other piercings will be removed during lab and clinical, or covered by flesh colored tape or earring covers/caps.

**Tattoos** Visible tattoos are not a part of the MWSU Department of Nursing overall professional dress and appearance. Students will be required to cover them as much as possible in the clinical and laboratory settings, unless such covering of the tattoo creates a safety or infection control issue. Such exceptions must be approved by the RN-BSN Program Coordinator or the Chairperson of the nursing department.

**All students must meet the professional appearance policies of the individual clinical agency. Failure to adhere to policies could result in a conduct report.**

### **Social Media Policy**

Web-based tools that allow interactive and highly accessible communication between individuals are broadly referred to as social media. Social media and the use of electronic devices have the potential to improve and strengthen the knowledge and understanding of the student, instructor, and client. Health professions students have the responsibility to understand the benefits, responsibilities and potential consequences of their

participation in social media. The use of social media by health professions students reflect on his/her individual professional self-image and that of the global image of health care professionals.

Social Network Communication:

- Online social networking includes but is not limited to blogs, journals, Facebook, SnapChat, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, Tumblr.
- Students may not post comments or digital images that would compromise another person's or organization's privacy (HIPAA), or comments that do not conform to state and federal laws.
- Students should also be aware that postings on social networking sites may be viewed by potential employers and reflect negatively on the individual and /or the university.

The Department of Nursing suggests that nursing students observe the following tips for online behavior endorsed by the American Nurses Association:

[https://www.ncsbn.org/NSNA\\_Social\\_Media\\_Recommendations.pdf](https://www.ncsbn.org/NSNA_Social_Media_Recommendations.pdf)

### **Videotaping/Audio Recording**

Students may be expected to participate in the use of videotaping as learning experiences or as a validation of clinical experiences. Students must notify the faculty if they intend to use recording devices (tape recorders, recording pens, etc.) in class. Students will not be permitted to use recording devices during clinical post-conferences due to the sensitive nature of information being shared.

### **Conferences/Events**

The Department of Nursing may require students to attend scheduled professional conferences and events. This will be communicated to students in advance and will be included in course syllabi.

### **Student Organizations**

Every student has the opportunity to join an organization or club. These organizations include student government, religious groups, intramurals, band, chorus, ensembles, plays, debates, sororities, and fraternities. For a detailed list of the University recognized clubs and organizations currently active on campus, see the *Missouri Western State University Student Handbook*.

**Student Nurses Association** - The Department of Nursing encourages nursing students to join the Student Nurses Association (SNA). The purpose of this organization is to help prepare student nurses for professional responsibilities. Members of this organization consist of pre-nursing students and student nurses enrolled in the Missouri Western State University nursing program.

**Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society - Omicron Nu Chapter** Missouri Western State University established the Omicron Nu Chapter of Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society to:

- recognize superior achievement;
- recognize the development of leadership qualities;
- foster high professional standards;
- encourage creative work; and

- strengthen commitment to the ideals and purposes of the profession.

Members are selected from 3rd and 4th semester students and RN-BSN students enrolled in the program, and community nurse leaders with a baccalaureate degree. Candidates shall have demonstrated superior scholastic achievement, academic integrity, professional leadership potential and/or marked achievement in the field of nursing. Students who are selected shall have a grade point average of at least 3.0 and shall rank not lower than the highest 35% of their class in scholarship.

### **Scholarships and Financial Aid**

Those students seeking financial aid should see a representative in the Financial Aid Office located in Eder Hall, 271-4361. The Financial Aid Office representative can assist students with information regarding various types of loans, grants, job assistance, and scholarships. Upon admission into the Nursing Program, students are also eligible to compete for specific nursing scholarships.

Applications and information are available online at [www.missouriwestern.edu/Finaid/](http://www.missouriwestern.edu/Finaid/).

## **ACADEMIC REGULATIONS**

### **Grading Scale**

Specific requirements for each course and the method for determining the student's course grade can be found in each course syllabus. The grading scale utilized by Missouri Western State University Department of Nursing is as follows:

|              |   |
|--------------|---|
| 90 - 100     | A |
| 80 - 89      | B |
| 70 - 79      | C |
| 60 - 79      | D |
| Less than 60 | F |

A grade of "C" or better is required in all nursing and support courses. Students receiving a grade below "C" (including withdrawal (W) and audit (AU)) in any nursing course will be placed on probation. Students who receive a grade below "C" may repeat that course one time only. Any students receiving a grade below "C" twice in one course or in two or more courses will be dismissed from the RN-BSN Nursing Program (see Dismissal Policy).

### **Grade Appeal Process**

Students are responsible for meeting the standards for academic performance established for each course in which they are enrolled. Students should maintain ongoing and open communication with the instructor.

In the event that a student believes that the grade received was based on something other than the performance in the course, that the grade assignment was the result of more exacting or demanding standards than were applied to other students in the course, or that the assignment of the grade was representative of a substantial departure from the instructor's previously announced standards, an appeal may be made.



The student must discuss the course grade with the instructor of the course no later than 30 days into the succeeding regular academic semester. If the student desires to appeal the grade further, the student must notify the Chairperson of the nursing department in writing. The appeal must be made to the Chairperson no later than ten (10) calendar days after the aforementioned 30 days. The Chairperson shall notify the student in writing of the departmental decision within 30 calendar days of the receipt of the written appeal. If the appeal is not resolved at the departmental level, the student may follow the grade appeal process outlined in the *MWSU Student Handbook*. It is the responsibility of the student to initiate and proceed through the grade appeal process as outlined in the *MWSU Student Handbook*

### **Student Complaints/Concerns**

Students who wish to file a grade appeal follow the process as outlined in the MWSU Student Handbook and the Student Nurse Handbook. Open, direct, honest and respectful communication is expected of both students and faculty.

If other concerns arise, the student is expected to discuss these concerns openly and honestly with the appropriate faculty member using the designated chain-of-command. The student may also seek guidance from their academic advisor and/or RN-BSN Program Coordinator. If resolution cannot be reached, the student may file a formal complaint and follow the designated process.

### **Formal Complaint**

Formal complaints are defined as complaints from internal or external stakeholders that cannot be addressed by existing due process policies. The process for management of such complaints includes:

1. Complaints must be submitted to the Chairperson of the nursing department in written format and signed by the complainant.
2. Anonymous submissions will not be acknowledged, nor will written comments provided on behalf of an anonymous source.
3. The Chairperson will respond to all complaints within ten working days to attempt resolution of the complaint.
4. If satisfactory resolution is not or cannot be reached, the complainant may appeal to the Dean of the College of Science & Health.
5. The Dean will respond in writing to the complainant within ten working days. A copy of the written response will be forwarded to the Chairperson.
6. If satisfactory resolution is not reached at the Dean level, the appeal may be submitted to the Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs. A written response to the complainant will be completed within ten working days. The decision of the Provost is final. A copy of the decision will be forwarded to the Dean of the College of Science & Health.
7. The Chairperson will maintain a file on all formal complaints.

The Chairperson will provide a summary report at the Annual Program Evaluation Meeting of each academic year's formal complaints received/resolved with recommendations, as indicated, for program improvement.

### **Leave of Absence Policy**

Students in the nursing program are expected to maintain continuous enrollment in nursing courses until the degree is completed. However, at times it is necessary for a student to take time off from nursing courses for

health, personal or financial reasons.

A student considering a leave of absence should follow the procedure described below:

- Discuss the potential leave of absence with your academic advisor and/or the RN-BSN program coordinator. Write a letter to the RN-BSN Program Coordinator describing the reasons for and dates of the anticipated leave.
- The RN-BSN Coordinator will review the request and make a recommendation to the RN-BSN Committee to make a decision. The RN-BSN Coordinator will notify the student.
- A leave of absence is typically granted for one semester but may be extended to two semesters if necessary.
- Prior to resuming nursing courses, the student should notify the RN-BSN Program Coordinator in writing during the semester preceding the semester they wish to return. Decisions on resuming nursing courses are based on the student being in good standing at the time of the leave.
- A student may request a leave of absence one time.

If the student is granted an official leave of absence:

- Student must reapply to MWSU per university policy prior to enrolling in courses

If a student is absent for over 2 semesters, and has not been granted an official leave of absence, the readmission process should be followed

- Student must reapply to MWSU per university policy
- Student must reapply to the RN-BSN program

## **NURSING PROGRESSION POLICIES**

### **Admission Policy**

- Graduate of Associate Degree Nursing Program\* or Diploma Nursing School with a minimum overall GPA of 2.7.
- Current, unencumbered RN licensure in the U.S.
  - Recent graduates will be placed on probationary status pending obtainment of RN license.
- Provisional Acceptance may be granted for those with lower GPA. These students must:
  - Successfully complete NUR384 Transitions to Baccalaureate Nursing with B or better

*\*Graduates of ADN Program from a higher education institution with regional accreditation recognized by the U.S. Department of Education. Graduates of non-accredited A.D.N. programs should contact the Department of Nursing for additional admission requirements.*

### **Progression Policy**

- Students must achieve a grade of "C" or better in all required nursing and support courses in order to continue progression in the nursing program. A grade of less than C (Includes D, F, W, or Audit - AU) is not satisfactory for progression.
- Students receiving a grade below "C" (including withdrawal (W) and audit (AU)) in any nursing course will be placed on probation.
- Students who receive a grade below "C" may repeat that course one time only.
- Any students receiving a grade below "C" twice in one course or in more than two courses will be dismissed from the RN-BSN Nursing Program (see Dismissal Policy).
- The Department of Nursing does not assume responsibility for a student's program progression

when a student does not progress according to the plan of study for any reason.

### **Probation Policy**

- Any student who receives a “C” as a final course grade in a given semester in the Nursing Program will be placed on nursing academic probation.
- Students who receive a grade below “C” may repeat that course one time only.
- In addition to repeating the course, they will meet with the RN-BSN Coordinator to determine what factors may have affected academic performance and determine strategies to alleviate them.
- Any students receiving a grade below “C” twice in one course or in more than two courses will be dismissed from the RN-BSN Nursing Program.

### **Dismissal Policy**

Recommendation of dismissal is made to the RN-BSN Program Coordinator. Students are notified of dismissal in writing by the RN-BSN Program Coordinator. Any student who is dismissed and has exhausted all appeals will be administratively withdrawn from nursing courses and the nursing major will be dropped.

The nursing student may be dismissed from the nursing program for the following reasons:

- Grade below "C" (D, F, W-withdrawal, or AU-audit) earned in a course twice or in more than two nursing courses.
- Inability to meet course or clinical objectives due to a physical or mental impairment (see Impaired Student Policy).
- Knowingly furnishing false information.
- Failure to comply with pre-admission and annual requirements for placement in clinical agencies.
- Failure to comply with American Nurses Association *Code of Ethics for Nurses* or American Nurses Association *Scope and Standards for Nursing Practice* or violation of confidentiality standards.
- Failure to demonstrate the behaviors conducive to effective nursing as stated by the Missouri Nursing Practice Act (Chapter 335, Section 335.011 to 335.096). These include: unprofessional conduct, or any act derogatory to the morals and standards of those engaged in the care of the client; unfit or incompetence by reason of negligence; lack of professional skill; chemical impairment; or mental incompetence.

### **Student Appeal of Recommendation for Dismissal**

Upon notification of dismissal, the student submits a request for readmission to the RN-BSN Program Coordinator within 5 university working days of receipt of letter of dismissal. The request should be presented in writing detailing the rationale for why the student should be readmitted. The letter should include a description of the circumstances that led to the student’s poor performance and strategies for improved performance if readmitted. Readmission decisions will consider the following factors:

- Documentation of circumstances beyond the student’s control
- Documentation that the circumstances leading to poor performance have been alleviated.
- Past academic performance (e.g. grades in nursing courses, repeats and withdrawals).
- Written communication or conduct reports on file related to student performance.

1. The RN-BSN Program Coordinator will consult with the RN-BSN Committee and provide a written decision to the student within 10 university working days following receipt of the request for readmission.
2. If the student disagrees with the decision, an appeal may be made to the Chairperson of the nursing department. The Chairperson will notify the student and the RN-BSN Program Coordinator of the decision within ten (10) University working days.
3. If the student disagrees with the Chairperson's decision, an appeal may be made to the Provost. The Provost will notify the student and Chairperson within 10 working days. The decision of the Provost is final.

### **Readmission Policy**

Readmission decisions will consider the following factors:

- Documentation of circumstances beyond the students' control
- Documentation that the circumstances leading to poor performance have been alleviated
- Past Academic Performance [e.g. grades in pre-requisite, support, and nursing courses, repeats and withdrawals]
- Written communication or Conduct Reports on file related to student performance

Written confirmation of physical and/or mental well-being from the appropriate health care professional may be required before readmission to the nursing program is considered (See *Impaired Student Policy*)

Readmission is not guaranteed, however, all requests for readmission will be considered. If a student is readmitted to the program, their continued progression will be provided on a 'space available basis.' Readmitted students will be subject to the same requirements, grading systems, and policies which govern the class to which they are readmitted. **A student may be readmitted to the nursing program only one time.**

### **Student input/Program evaluation**

The Department of Nursing requests that all students participate in ongoing evaluation of the Nursing Program.

1. Evaluation: At the end of each semester, students provide input for each course, instructor and clinical routine site. The evaluation process continues after graduation with follow-up surveys to graduates and employers.
2. Student Forums: Students will be given the opportunity and are encouraged to participate in student forums with semester faculty to discuss issues and concerns.

### **Nursing Program Pinning Ceremony**

The Pinning Ceremony will precede Commencement Ceremony and is an opportunity for the faculty to welcome the graduates into professional nursing practice. Student purchase of the Missouri Western nursing pin is optional.

### **Composite Class Picture**

Students are encouraged to have their portrait taken for the graduate composite which is displayed in the Department of Nursing.

## **Graduation Requirements**

To be considered as a candidate for graduation, the student must follow the graduation requirements as stated in the Missouri Western State University Catalog. In order to measure student progress toward educational goals, students are required to participate in periodic assessment efforts at MWSU. Grades, transcripts, and graduation will be held if the student does not participate in this required testing.

## **Management Of Unprofessional Or Unsafe Behavior**

Students in the nursing program at Missouri Western State University are expected to practice according to the standards set by the profession. The American Nurses Association *Standards for Professional Practice* and the American Nurses Association *Code of Ethics for Nurses* as well as clinical agency policies and standards document these expectations.

Students should be aware that a behavior that deviates significantly from these standards and that is unsafe, illegal or unprofessional may result in a recommendation for dismissal from the program.

While a single incident may be serious enough to warrant an immediate recommendation for dismissal, a pattern of less serious, unsafe or unprofessional behaviors may also result in a recommendation for dismissal. MWSU Department of Nursing may request a student to have a drug retest for cause at any point, without notice, during the nursing program at the student's expense (See Nursing Student Drug Testing Policy).

In addition, students who fail to meet the objectives for a clinical course will not receive a passing grade for the course.

The following algorithm specifies the actions to be taken if a student's behavior deviates from the accepted standards.

Conduct Reports should be initiated anytime the instructor deems it appropriate to document a student's performance in writing for their permanent file. This serves as a tracking mechanism for patterns of behavior as well as documentation of student acknowledgment of classroom and/or clinical concerns. The Conduct Report includes:

- o The event
  - o Plan for improvement/correction.
  - o Consequences for repeat behavior and/or failure to meet expectations of plan.
  - o Timelines for expected improvement.
  - o Signature of faculty member with date.
  - o Signature of student with date.
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## **Policy Statement Regarding the Impaired Nursing Student**

Students in the Nursing Program at Missouri Western State University (MWSU) are expected to practice according to the standards set by the profession. The Missouri Nurse Practice Act, the American Nurses Association's (ANA) Scope and Standards of Practice and the Code of Ethics for Nurses document these

expectations. The nursing faculty believes that they have a professional and ethical responsibility to provide a safe teaching and learning environment and to protect the welfare of the public. As such, nursing faculty have a responsibility to take action when a student's behavior deviates from these professional standards, including a student whose behavior is significantly impaired.

- The problems of chemical abuse and/or mental illness, resulting in unsafe behaviors must be proactively addressed when identified in nursing students. The nursing faculty will intervene with the impaired student as outlined in the Procedure for Faculty Intervention with the Impaired Nursing Student and in accordance with the Nursing Student Handbook with reference to Nursing Student Ethical-Legal Liability and Student Responsibilities. MWSU Department of Nursing may request a student to have a drug retest for cause at any point, without notice, during the nursing program at the student's expense (See Nursing Student Drug Testing Policy).
- The nursing program follows the university's policy prohibiting disruptive behavior and the illegal possession, use, or distribution of drugs and/or alcohol by students on university property or as a part of any university affiliated academic activity, including off-campus clinical learning experiences. Violators will be prosecuted in accordance with applicable laws and ordinances and will be subject to disciplinary action by the university in conformance with university policy (See MWSU Student Handbook regarding Code of Conduct for Students and Alcohol and Drug Policies).
- The nursing faculty defines the impaired student as a person who, while in the academic or clinical setting, demonstrates unsafe behaviors resulting from mental illness or from chemical abuse. Chemical abuse is defined as abusing, either separately or in combination: alcohol, over-the-counter medications, illegal drugs, prescribed medications, inhalants, or synthetic designer drugs. Abuse of the substances includes episodic misuse or chronic use that has produced psychological and/or physical symptoms. Mental illness is an acute or chronic condition that disrupts a person's thinking, feeling, moods, and functioning. Mental illness can interfere in coping with the ordinary demands of work, school, and family. Disruptive behavior is defined as conduct that reflects unfavorably on the individual or university community; or exhibits behavior/activities which endangers self or others and/or disrupts class or university activities.

### **The RN-BSN New Student Orientation (NSO) Canvas Page**

*Canvas* is a system utilized by the Department of Nursing to communicate with nursing students. All nursing students are expected to access *Canvas* on a regular basis.

***Canvas*** is an online learning management system that is linked to all courses at MWSU. In addition to course-specific *Canvas* pages, each nursing student will have access to the RN-BSN New Student Orientation (NSO) module. Important information regarding the Department of Nursing and all required forms and documents can be downloaded from this site.

### **Acknowledgement of Student Handbook**

Students are expected to read the regulations and policies in the University Undergraduate catalog, University Student Handbook, and the RN-BSN Student Handbook. It is the student's responsibility, not the university or a member of the faculty or staff, for knowing and abiding by the regulations and policies, and for meeting the requirements for a nursing degree.

After reading the policies contained in this handbook, students should download from the Nursing Information and Clinical Expectations Resource (NICER) the *Acknowledgement of Student Handbook* form and sign it acknowledging that all policies have been read.