

**RN-BSN
STUDENT HANDBOOK**

**Academic Year
2015-2016**

**DEPARTMENT
OF
NURSING**



**West Chester University
West Chester, Pennsylvania 19383**

Table of Contents

Welcome Letter	2
General Information.....	3
Requirements for RN"s Completing BSN.....	4
Overview of Program.....	6
Nursing Course Descriptions.....	7
Other Courses.....	8
RN-BSN Agreement Form.....	10
RN-BSN Advisement Form.....	12
Advising.....	13
Frequently Asked Questions.....	15

Dear RN-BSN Student,

Welcome to the RN-BSN Program of the Department of Nursing at West Chester University. We hope that you will find your experience here to be pleasant, challenging and rewarding.

This handbook is intended as a Nursing Department Handbook to the current West Chester University Undergraduate Catalog and other university publications. The handbook has been prepared to provide you with a guide to useful information about the department and the RN-BSN Program. You are strongly encouraged to keep this handbook throughout your association with the department, as well as with your personal professional records. You will find it helpful in planning and recording progress in your program and useful at a later date in reconstructing portions of your professional credentials.

Please note that the material in this handbook is subject to change as University and/or department policies are revised. Department advisors will attempt to keep you informed about department and undergraduate policies. Ultimately, however, it is still your responsibility to complete all requirements, conform to policies which are in force and meet all deadlines. Consultation with your advisor can help to prevent an untimely delay in your date of graduation or problems with your progression.

As a faculty, we look forward to a rewarding association with you and hope that you will take advantage of all that our department and the University have to offer.

Sincerely,

Debi Mandel

**Dr. Debi Mandel PhD, RNC-OB
Assistant Professor
RN-BSN Program Coordinator**

General Information

Department Name: Department of Nursing

Mailing Address: 855 South New Street, Department of Nursing, 222 Sturzebecker HSC
West Chester Univ. West Chester, PA 19383
(610) 436-3083

Fax Number: Dr. Charlotte Mackey RN, MSN, EdD
Department Chairperson: HSC, Room 222D (610) 436-3474

RN-BSN Faculty:

Deborah Mandel, RNC-OB, MSN, PhD
RN-BSN Coordinator
HSC, Room 222J (610) 436-3488
Barbara Harrison PhD, CRNP
Anna Mae Galbraith, RN, MSN, MBA
Philadelphia Campus Faculty
John Taylor, DNP, RN-BC, CPN
HSC, Room 222, (610) 436-2219

Dean College of Health Sciences: Dr. Linda Adams
204 Sturzebecker HSC
(610) 436-2938

Department Office: Department of Nursing, HSC Room 222
Administrative Assistant
Linda Morrow (610-430-4181)
Department Secretary
(610- 436-2219)

REQUIREMENTS FOR REGISTERED NURSES COMPLETING THE BSN

INTRODUCTION

The Department of Nursing is committed to a program which is modified to meet the individualized needs of registered nurses who wish to earn the baccalaureate degree. Policies for admission, individualized progression through the program and for placement in the nursing courses are provided below.

ADMISSION CRITERIA

The RN student shall:

1. Have graduated or graduating from a state approved school.
2. Be licensed as a registered nurse in Pennsylvania **before** starting nursing courses..
3. RN-BSN applicants for consideration must have a minimum cumulative grade point average of 2.75.
4. Complete the WCU on-line application for undergraduate admission.
5. Number of students admitted is based on volume of applicants and nursing seat availability.

ADMISSION PROCEDURE FOR RN TO BSN PROGRAM

1. RN applies to the office of Undergraduate Admissions and receives "provisional acceptance" if/when criteria are met.
2. RN meets with the RN-BSN Coordinator in the Department of Nursing for purposes of an interview for the program:
 - A. preliminary *unofficial review of transcripts and review of course requirements*
 - B. identifying the projected academic semester of planned enrollment in the nursing courses
3. The RN and the RN-BSN Coordinator sign the "agreement" between the RN applicant and the Department of Nursing.
4. A copy of the signed "agreement" is forwarded to the Admissions Office which then provides a final acceptance to the applicant as a nursing major at WCU.
5. All RN-BSN students are required to be licensed. Nursing students must provide a copy of their current nursing license either on Admission to the program or by the start of NSG 313.
6. **WCUs Department of Nursing is unable to accept students who have achieved their Associate's Degree in Nursing from a correspondence school.**

TRANSFER CREDITS

Evaluation of transfer credits is done by the Transfer Credit Analyst in the Registrar's Office. According to WCU University policy, a minimum of thirty (30) credits must be taken at West Chester University to achieve a degree at WCU. According to the Residency Rule 30 out of the last 45 credits must be taken at WCU.

*** We highly recommend that students take their last 30 credits at WCU**

The Curriculum Committee of the Nursing Department unanimously approved the PHENSA Articulation Model for registered nursing students in spring, 1997. This model allows for transfer of nursing credits if the student has graduated from an NLN accredited program in the last 10 years or has practiced nursing 1000 hours within the last 3 years.

ADVISEMENT

RN students are assigned to an RN-BSN advisor in the Nursing Department. The RN student is required to maintain regular contact with the advisor in order to progress through the program in the appropriate sequence. An advisement record sheet will be utilized to facilitate the educational progress of the student.

Course registration information can be obtained from **myWCU**. Student information guides on scheduling can be found at : [http://wcupa.edu/scheduling classes](http://wcupa.edu/scheduling_classes)

Pre-registration counseling with the faculty advisor **is required** in order to “gain access” for scheduling.

UNIVERSITY REQUIREMENTS

To attend classes at WCU, all incoming adult commuter students must provide their immunization records to WCU Student Health Center. The Department of Nursing *has waived* the physical requirement for the RN-BSN student who does not do traditional clinical experiences.

DRESS CODE

The faculty believes that the appearance of a nurse is important. RN-BSN students are expected to comply with individual institution policies regarding dress code. If not specified by institution, students should wear appropriate “dress casual”.

USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

The use of social media and other electronic communication is increasing with growing numbers of social media outlets, platforms and applications, including blogs, social networking sites, video sites, and online chat rooms and forums. Nurses often use electronic media both personally and professionally. Instances of inappropriate use of electronic media by nurses have been reported to boards of nursing and, in some cases, reported in nursing literature and the media.

Federal law reinforces and further defines privacy through the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). HIPAA regulations are intended to protect patient privacy by defining individually identifiable information and establishing how this information may be used, by whom and under what circumstances.

Potential consequences for inappropriate use of social and electronic media by a nurse are varied. The potential consequences will depend, in part, on the particular nature of the nurse's conduct.

Board of Nursing Implications

Instances of inappropriate use of social and electronic media may be reported to the Board of Nursing. The laws outlining the basis for disciplinary action by a Board of Nursing vary between jurisdictions. Depending on the laws of a jurisdiction, a Board of Nursing may investigate reports of inappropriate disclosures on social media by a nurse on the grounds of: unprofessional conduct; unethical conduct; moral turpitude; mismanagement of patient records; revealing a privileged communication; and breach of confidentiality.

If the allegations are found to be true, the licensed nurse may face disciplinary action by the Board of Nursing, including a reprimand or sanction, assessment of a monetary fine, or temporary or permanent loss of licensure. (National Council on State Boards of Nursing (August, 2011). *White Paper: A Nurse's Guide to Social Media*)

The entire White Paper can be found on the National Council's website www.ncsbn.org

Students are held to the same standards stated above and may face dismissal from the program if found to be using social media in an inappropriate manner.

OVERVIEW OF PROGRAM

The RN-BSN Program was created with the working professional in mind. It is geared to the busy life styles of today's health care professionals, with courses intended to stimulate the mind and advance your career.

Courses are taught using a learning management system, Desire 2 Learn (D2L). Students can get the Orientation at https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLx1YUKJw02fFrXXSmvc4sBvAFMW4_-TqV

The **length** of the program **varies** for each student. It is very **individualized** and up to you whether you do it quickly or gradually. The number of courses required to complete the degree depends on the number and type of credits/courses you transfer.

Please note that the MAT 121(Statistics) course is required prior to or concurrently with NSG 313 Research. Statistics is required prior to starting NSG/NSL 311. The next nursing course is NSG/NSL 412. If taking the hybrid course option you are in school the same night of the week for all three nursing courses.

Because everyone comes to the program with a different number and variety of credits from various institutions, the courses the students are required to take at WCU will vary for each student.

All students **must have 120 credits to graduate and 30 credits must be achieved from WCU.**

The WCU residency rule requires that that the last 30 of the last 45 credits be WCU credits. Of those thirty credits, twenty-two (22) of those are from **nursing courses**. The nursing courses are taken over two-three semesters.

The University has **General Education requirements**, which students must complete to meet the WCU graduation requirements and specific cognate courses required by the department. Those courses may be either transferred into the university (if taken previously) or taken at WCU. **Courses that typically must be taken at WCU are the Interdisciplinary “I” and Diversity “J” courses.**

Currently, WCU does not charge a fee for transfer of credits or have a limit on the age of transferred courses. WCU Department of Nursing has **Articulation Agreements with Delaware County Community College and Montgomery County Community College**, which facilitate the transfer of credits from those institutions and admission into the program.

WCUs RN-BSN Program utilizes **Web and Web-Enhanced courses**, which feature a mix of on-line assignments which translate to abbreviated time in the classroom. NSG 311 (4 credits), NSG 313 (3 credits), and NSG 412 (5 credits) are taken typically over three semesters.

Nursing clinical courses NSL 311 & 412 (5 credits each), require “focused clinical assignments” in which provide students provide direct and indirect care to clients in the community and interview RNs in the workplace, are completed by the student(s) on their own time throughout the semester.

NURSING COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

NSG 313 this three credit course offered either in a hybrid or online forma via **D2L** is designed to assist students in understanding, interpreting and applying the nursing research process to a variety of nursing clinical situations. Opportunities will be provided to develop a literature review and to critique nursing research studies. Prerequisite Statistics MAT 121 or equivalent course

NSG 311 is a four credit class which meets either one night/week or via **D2L**. The course utilizes a Web-enhanced format (**D2L**); therefore in class time may vary. The focus of the NSG 311 course is *Community Health /Public Health Nursing, wellness, health teaching, and promotion*. NSG 311 follows the unit topics of WCUs traditional BSN program, adapted for the professional from diverse generic programs and clinical backgrounds.

NSL 311 is a five credit course “focused clinical assignment”, **which must be taken concurrently with NSG 311** and is reflective of NSG 311 content. It is completed independently in small groups throughout the semester on the students’ own time table. Students work in groups and provide direct care and health teaching or promotion activities in their community chosen. The focus of the assignments consists of a preliminary *Initial Survey; an in-depth Community Assessment/Data Collection; Data & Health Needs Analysis; Complete Health History and Health Needs Care Plan; Health Teaching Assignment within the Community, and a Community Presentation highlighting the students’ Community of Interest*.

Students teaching out of State (NJ, Delaware, and NY etc.) must hold license in that state and provide the Nursing Office proof of licensure.

NSG 412 is a five credit course, which follows the same format of NSG 311 (see above). The focus of this course is: *Leadership/Management; Evidence-Based Practice; Ethical- Legal and Professional Roles and Issues*.

NSL 412 is also a five credit course with “focused clinical assignments”, **which also must be taken concurrently with NSG 412** and is reflective of NSG 412 content. The student works independently throughout the semester to complete these assignments, which are geared to the RN’s professional advancement.

Some examples of these assignments are: *Interview with Nurse leader/manager and Risk manager and member of IRB or Ethics Committee; Attendance at Nursing or Ethics Committee meeting; Review of budget process; Resume; Research Utilization and EBP paper, Professional Issues and Professional Career Opportunities*.

Progression: Please note that the RN-BSN student must complete each nursing course **NSG 313, NSG & NSL 311, & NSG/NSL 412 with a C (73 or greater) to progress in the RN-BSN Program**. If a grade of a C- or lower (72 or lower) is achieved in the nursing courses (either 311 or 412) nursing courses must be repeated concurrently (NSG and NSL).

OTHER COURSES

Prospective students should consult the “RN-BSN Agreement Form” for a listing of the courses required to complete the BSN. In consulting the Advisement/Agreement Form, please solicit input from nursing faculty before taking additional *science or social science courses* as some of the content may be integrated in your basic program.

As a part of your admission to WCU, you will attend a group interview with the RN-BSN program coordinator to review your courses and determine what you need to take pending of your anticipated transfer credits. This is considered an “unofficial review” until official transfer credits are posted by the Registrar.

At any time, you may consult the **Transfer Course Equivalencies** on the WCU Registrar’s Web site to determine how a course from another institution will transfer into WCU.

Pre-requisite courses that you need prior to the nursing courses, and which most students already have **are:** WRT 120 & 200 (basic writing or composition courses); MAT 121(Statistics); PSY 100 (Intro to Psych); SOC 200 (Intro to Sociology or other Sociology courses) and PSY 210 or HEA 206 (Developmental Psych). The latter may be content that is integrated in some basic programs.

MAT 121 or equivalent (grade of 70 or better) prior to starting NSG/NSL 313.

Other courses that you will need include:

SPK 208 or 230 is a general education requirement for graduation. SPK 208 is Public Speaking and SPK 230 is Business/Professional Speech. This course may also be transferred in, if it is an equivalent course.

Interdisciplinary course is also referred to as an “**I**” course and can be taken at any point in your academic career at WCU. There are many interesting selections in this category and you will find one that interests you and fits your schedule. There are at least two “I” courses, which are offered during the summer in week long workshop formats, which mesh nicely with RN-BSN students’ schedules. Infrequently, “I” courses do transfer into WCU.

Diverse Communities/Diversity also referred to as a “**J**” course. Again, there is a wide variety of these courses available. Some “J” courses are available during the summer in a week long workshop format. **Diversity Courses DO NOT transfer into WCU and must be taken at WCU.**

Humanities:

You need to have two courses (six credits) from two of these three categories: Literature, History or Philosophy.

CLEP tests are available for History and Literature courses.

CLEP tests are posted as *Transfer credits and therefore aren’t included in the 30 credits from WCU!*

Art:

This is a very general area to select from. You may choose one course/three credits from: Art, Music, Dance, Theater, Photography or Film. This is a course that readily transfers from another institution, since the area is so broad.

Electives

The number of electives (both nursing and general) you will need to take will depend on the number and distribution of transfer credits. Remember you must achieve a minimum of 120 credits to achieve a BSN plus meet all the WCU’s General Education requirements.

Need additional credits, consider CLEP testing!

ADVISING

Each student on admission to the program is assigned an advisor, who remains their advisor throughout their course of study at WCU, not only for the nursing courses. The academic advisor guides the RN-BSN student through the program, attempting to facilitate the process for the adult learner; however, the *student is ultimately responsible* for their progress in the program and for graduation clearance. Students will print and review in **myWCU** their “*Transfer Credit Analysis*” and “*Degree Progress Report*” and bring to advising appointments.

It is the student’s responsibility to:

- Be aware of current program and University requirements and consult materials about the program’s course of study;
- verify that transfer credits are posted;
- determine with advisor’s guidance what courses are needed for graduation;
- meet each semester with the advisor to plan the sequence of courses;
- apply for graduation clearance one semester prior to planned graduation.

Students must monitor their WCU webmail!

Scheduling/registering for classes occurs early in the semester for the next semester. Each semester you will receive an advising reminder from your academic advisor in WCU webmail. Please read this reminder for the specific details/dates about advising and scheduling for that semester. Scheduling is done on-line via **myWCU**. You received directions for this process with your acceptance.

All **courses** for the semester are listed on line **myWCU**. **Descriptions** of all courses are in the **WCU course catalog online**.

Please do not miss your on-line scheduling appointment. This appointment is not your advisor appointment, BUT is your on-line WCU scheduling appointment. That time is when you are released by the WCU computer system to schedule courses on My WCU. If you are not available at that time, you have been granted access to schedule after your appointed date/time. General Education classes fill quickly, so schedule on/or closely to your appointment time otherwise you may not be able to schedule the classes you want.

Nursing courses are scheduled by the Nursing Department or by your advisor. This is due to RN-BSN students unique transfer situation and position in the university, the computer doesn’t always recognize the RN-BSN program of study (within the university computer system) and hence won’t allow you to schedule the nursing classes.

Also, don’t panic, if the computer tells you that you don’t meet the requirements for graduation or for the next course. The computer does not recognize the unique and different requirements of the RN-BSN Program, hence the notice “Nursing Cognate not met”. You will be cleared for graduation by the RN-BSN Coordinator. Remember, Don’t Panic!! Contact your advisor! You are required to respond to the Registrar’s Graduation Analyst’s requests for information and clarification regarding your academic courses so that you can successfully transition to graduation.

Everything is available to you through your WCU webmail (on-line) and university offices *expect you to check there* for important information, particularly, notification regarding *Graduation Clearance*. **You may apply online with the Registrar's office for graduation at least one semester prior to your anticipated graduation. If you wait to apply for graduation during your final semester at WCU, you must go to the Registrar's office IN PERSON to apply for graduation. If your anticipated graduation date has changed (for which you have previously applied for), you must go in person to the Registrar's office to change graduation date.**

It is critical that you check/use your **WCU e-mail** as this is how the Registrar's Office **will notify you** of the graduation process.

If you are **taking a course off campus**, you must **complete a TRANSFER PERMISSION form** (on Registrar's webpage) and submit it to the WCU Registrar's Office *prior* to registering for the course off campus. This form verifies that the course is equivalent to a respective WCU course. **You must also request a transcript from that institution to have the course/credits transferred to WCU.** This transcript should be sent to the Registrar's Office after the course is completed and **NOT TO ADMISSIONS**.

Course Equivalencies for most colleges can be found on Registrar's page or in **myWCU**. Go into current students/registrar/transfer information/and then select course equivalencies.

Please consult the WCU Catalog re: Graduation Honors. You must have taken 60 credits at WCU to graduate with HONORS.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Do I have to pass the NCLEX exam before being accepted into the program?

A: You need to have successfully completed the NCLEX and be licensed before starting the nursing courses.

Can I manage work and this program?

A: This program was developed with the working professional in mind. Many students work full or part time, have families, and still manage to do well in the program.

What is the cost?

A: WCU is known as a one of the best values in public colleges. Compare WCU with other programs. Please look on www.wcupa.edu under Admission/Tuition for a listing of current tuition and fees.

Is the program on-line?

A: The program is offered in a hybrid (partially in class and partially online) OR fully online format (meets 3times per semester) . All courses utilize a web format (D2L) so RN-BSN students spend less time in the classroom.

Can I take courses at another school?

A: Yes, but you need at least 30 credits from WCU. Appropriate paperwork must be completed and approved by the WCU Registrar's office prior to taking a course off campus. See the Registrar's page for more information. <http://www.wcupa.edu/registrar/transferCredit.aspx>

Does the program have a clinical component?

A: NSL 311 and NSL 412, taken concurrently with NSG 311 and NSG 412, are *focused clinical courses*. This means you have specific clinically focused assignments, coordinated with the classroom content, which are due throughout the semester. You will do these assignments, individually or in small groups, on your own time according to specific guidelines and timelines, given to you and facilitated by the clinical instructor. **Students complete both direct and indirect care to the communities, clients and agencies through the focused clinical assignments.**

Is the program cohort-oriented? (This means that the program is not a drop-in or drop-out program. You have to stay with the group).

A: Only the nursing courses are cohort oriented.

What if I have another degree?

A: Students will need an additional 30 credits, including the 22 nursing credits from WCU to graduate with a BSN. Students with previous Bachelor's degree need to complete paperwork to the WCU Registrar.

ID # _____

WEST CHESTER UNIVERSITY
Department of Nursing
RN/BSN STUDENT AGREEMENT FORM

Email: _____

Work Phone # _____

Cell Phone # _____

NAME _____ MAIDEN _____ Home Phone # _____

ADDRESS _____

2nd Degree _____ NCLEX _____ EMPLOYER _____

- I. Academic Foundation (18 s.h.)**
Requirements
 * WRT 120 (3) _____
 * WRT 200, 204, 205, 206, 208 or 220 (3) _____
 * MAT 121-Stats (3) _____
 SPK 208, 230 (3) _____

Interdisciplinary Course (I) (3) _____

Diversity Course (J) (3) _____

- II. Distributive Requirements**
 A. Humanities (6 s.h.)
must be 2 different prefixes take two of the following
 LITERATURE (3) _____
 HISTORY (3) _____
 PHILOSOPHY (3) _____
 B. The Arts (3 s.h.)
One course in Art, Cinematography, Dance Music, Photography, or Theater
 (3) _____

- III. Behavioral & Social Science (9 s.h.)**
 * PSY 100 (3) _____
 * PSY 210 (3) _____
 OR HEA 206 (3) _____
 * SOC 200 (3) _____

- * Prerequisite to NSG 311 & NSL 311
 ** Prerequisite to NSG 412 & NSL 412

- IV. Physical Sciences and Nutrition**
based on transcript review
 * CHEM (3 – 8 cr.) _____
 * NTD 303 (3) _____
 * BIO 259 (4) _____
 * BIO 269 (4) _____
 * BIO 204 (4) _____

Science General Ed (6 cr.) (Passport)
must be 2 different prefixes
 CSC, BIO, CHE, ESS, or PHY

- V. Nursing (47 s.h.)**
 NSG 212 (4) _____ T
 NSL 212 (2) _____ T
 NSG 311 (4) _____
 NSL 311 (5) _____
 NSG 313 (3) _____
 NSG 312 (6) _____ T
 NSL 312 (5) _____ T
 NSG 411 (6) _____ T
 NSL 411 (5) _____ T
 * NSG412 (5) _____
 * NSL412 (5) _____

VI. Nursing Electives: typically not required

_____ (3) _____
 _____ (3) _____

- VII. Free Electives**
 _____ (3) _____
 _____ (3) _____
 _____ (3) _____

T= UNOFFICIAL PENDING TRANSFER CREDIT ANALYST APPROVAL BY WCU REGISTRAR

W = All students with less than 40 transfer credits need 3 Writing Emphasis Courses
 40 - 70 Credits -- 2 Writing Emphasis Courses
More than 70 -- 1 Writing Emphasis Course
All of the required Nursing courses have Writing Emphasis designation.

Students may take nursing electives with I (**Interdisciplinary**) or J (**Diversity**) designation to meet the requirement for interdisciplinary or diversity course.

*** All pre-requisites must be completed prior to NSG/NSL 311 80/90.**

**** MAT 121 must be completed prior to NSG/NSL 311-80/90.**

- ◆ Date of transfer into nursing _____
- ◆ Place in the space provided below the academic semester and year of planned enrollment in the first clinical nursing course _____
 Date _____
- Student: _____ Date _____
- RN/BSN Coordinator: _____ Date _____
- ◆ The Department of Nursing has a commitment ONLY to the semester/year agreed upon.

Per WCU University policy:

For each degree you achieve at WCU, you must earn 30 semester/credit hours.

Students must have a minimum of 120 semester hours/credits to graduate.

Students who are admitted into WCU's RN-BSN program must schedule a course at WCU for the next sequential Fall or Spring semester at WCU otherwise the student will have to reapply for admission to the program.

Students who do not take courses for two (2) consecutive semesters at WCU (Fall or Spring/ Spring or Fall) must reapply to WCU for admission.

I understand that this agreement is an UNOFFICIAL TRANSFER CREDIT EVALUATION AND FINAL TRANSFER CREDITS REQUIRE APPROVAL BY WCU REGISTRAR.

Student Signature: _____ Date _____