

THE
UNIVERSITY
OF RHODE ISLAND
COLLEGE OF
NURSING

Student Handbook

Online RN-BS Program

Bachelor of Science

2026-2027

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I. Introduction

This College of Nursing Student Handbook is provided as a guide for students enrolled in the online RN to BS program at URI, and is intended to provide nursing students with: (1) an overview of the College of Nursing and its history, vision, mission, values; (2) a description of the competencies baccalaureate students are expected to achieve prior to graduation (“expected program outcomes”); (3) a full description of the College’s academic and professional policies applicable to RN to BS students

This Handbook does not describe specific program courses and graduation requirements. A description of those academic and course requirements can be found in the Undergraduate Catalog and on the College of Nursing webpage.

This Handbook is also meant to supplement other University policy, program description and guidance documents including the University Manual, URI Student Handbook and University Catalog.

Each online RN to BS student assumes responsibility to become familiar with the information contained in this Handbook. Furthermore, students are expected to always comply with all policies and requirements set forth in this handbook.

The College reserves the right to add, delete, revise, or change the information, including all policies and procedures set forth in this Handbook. All students are expected to review the Handbook at the start of the academic year and as necessary throughout the academic year.

The Handbook may be accessed electronically on the College of Nursing website. This location will contain the most up-to-date version of the Handbook and supersedes all other versions.

Any questions pertaining to any of the contents of this Handbook should be emailed to the College of Nursing at RNBSOnline@uri.edu.

History of the College of Nursing

In September 1945, the University began its first nursing program with nine students in the School of Home Economics. In 1947, a Division of Nursing was established and Miss Louisa White, Associate Professor, was appointed Director. In 1970, the College began offering a Master's in Nursing and in 1985 a Doctor of Philosophy in Nursing. A Doctor in Nurse Practice (DNP) began in 2010.

Until 1968, nursing students lived in Providence during the clinical portion of the program and the majority of the faculty had offices at Rhode Island Hospital. In 1963, Fogarty Hall was dedicated and office space was provided for the Dean, several faculty and two secretaries. Finally, a new building was completed which was designed specifically for the College of Nursing. White Hall, named in honor of the first director of the nursing program, was dedicated on September 23, 1977.

Accreditation

The baccalaureate degree program in nursing/ master's degree program in nursing/Doctor of Nursing Practice program and/or post-graduate APRN certificate program and post-master's certificate at The University of Rhode Island is accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (<http://www.ccnaccreditation.org>).

Vision

The University of Rhode Island College of Nursing is a dynamic catalyst for improving health and transforming healthcare through innovation and excellence in education, knowledge development, discovery, and professional practice to meet the needs of a global society.

Mission

To prepare nurses to excel as outstanding and compassionate clinicians, scholars and leaders who will enhance the health and health care of individuals, families, communities, and populations both locally and globally.

Values

- Social justice, diversity, inclusivity, & civic engagement
- Respectful, ethical, humanistic, & compassionate care
- Intellectual curiosity, innovation, & scholarly inquiry
- Leadership, lifelong learning, & excellence in practice

II. Technical Standards

Nursing is a rigorous program of study and professional practice. Students are expected to demonstrate (with or without any pre-approved reasonable accommodations; (see “Accommodations for Qualified Students with Disabilities” section page 13) the ability to exercise all of the technical skills and to meet all the technical demands of the program --- including academic, cognitive, emotional, and psycho-motor skills and abilities--- in order to succeed.

Below are the technical standards that the college deems essential for training and practice in the profession of nursing to deliver safe and effective patient care.

Observational Ability: The student must demonstrate the ability to make and accurately interpret visual observations in all areas of patient care delivery, both in clinical facilities and simulation education.

Communication: Students must be able to communicate effectively and sensitively both verbally and non-verbally to elicit information and to translate information to others. The student must possess oral and written communication skills that permit effective communication with faculty, students, patients, families, and all members of the health care team in both clinical and classroom environments.

Motor Ability: The student must possess motor functions such that they are able to execute movements required to provide necessary care and treatment to all patients in clinical care settings. The student must possess skills that span fine motor and gross motor muscular movements, equilibrium, and functional use of all senses.

Intellectual – Conceptual Ability: The student must be able to demonstrate critical thinking and problem-solving skills. This includes the ability to measure, calculate, reason, prioritize, analyze, integrate, synthesize information and act with integrity and judgment, often in a time urgent environment. The student is expected to listen, speak, read, write, reason, and perform mathematical functions at a level which allows comprehension of materials both written and oral throughout the program.

Behavioral and emotional: The student must be able to withstand the psychological and physical rigors of nursing education and practice. The student must be able to maintain mature,

sensitive, and effective relationships with patients, students, faculty, staff, and other professionals under all circumstances, including highly stressful situations. Compassion, integrity, motivation, effective interpersonal skills, and concern for others are personal attributes required of those in the nursing program. The student is expected to have the emotional stability to fully utilize his or her intellectual abilities, exercise good judgment, and promptly complete all patient care responsibilities. Students must have the ability to meet these demands under stress and adapt to an environment that may change rapidly without warning and/or in unpredictable ways.

III. Bachelor of Science Program Outcomes

Below are the core competencies (also referred to as program outcomes) that Bachelor of Science students are expected to achieve by the end of the nursing program. Students demonstrate competency in these outcomes by meeting course objectives outlined in each course syllabus.

- 1. Knowledge for Nursing Practice:** Integrate and apply nursing knowledge supported by knowledge from liberal arts and sciences to enrich nursing practice
- 2. Person-Centered Care:** Implement holistic, just, compassionate, person-centered, evidence-based nursing care to individuals and families across the lifespan and spheres of care.
- 3. Population Health:** Use principles of social justice, advocacy, and collaboration to promote equitable care for individuals, families, communities, and populations, from prevention to disease management, through partnerships that address social determinants of health and improve population health outcomes.
- 4. Scholarship for the Nursing Discipline:** Engage in scholarly inquiry and critically appraise research as the foundation to deliver evidence-based nursing practice.
- 5. Quality and Safety:** Use principles of quality and safety as core values of nursing to enhance practice and minimize risk of harm to patients and providers.

6. Interprofessional Partnerships: Engage with individuals, families, communities, health care professionals, and other colleagues to optimize care, enhance the healthcare experience, and improve outcomes.

7. Systems-Based Practice: Coordinate and utilize resources in healthcare settings to provide safe, quality, equitable, and value- based care to diverse populations.

8. Informatics and Healthcare Technologies: Use healthcare technology to gather and interpret data, form information to support clinical judgment, provide care, and improve interprofessional communication that enhances healthcare delivery in accordance with best practice and professional and regulatory standards.

9. Professionalism: Cultivate a professional identity and conduct grounded in nursing core values of compassionate caring, a collaborative disposition, civility, accountability, ethics and social justice for exemplary practice.

10. Personal, Professional, and Leadership Development: Engage in wellness by participating in activities and self-reflection that fosters personal health, resilience, and well- being; contributes to lifelong learning; and supports the acquisition of nursing expertise and leadership.

IV. Academic Policies

Should any policy be added or modified, the updated information will be located on the College of Nursing webpage at [College of Nursing webpage](#)

Scholastic Standing/Academic Review

The academic records of all nursing students are reviewed by the College of Nursing Scholastic Standing Committee. This Committee is responsible for enforcing the academic policies set forth in the [University Manual](#) and the College of Nursing. The committee is composed of College of Nursing faculty and the Associate and Assistant Dean for Undergraduate Programs (ex officio members of the Committee).

Academic Progression & Dismissal Policy

1. Students are required to achieve a minimum grade of C in all required NUR courses, BPS 333 (nursing pharmacology) and STA 220 (statistics). Students must maintain a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.20 to progress in and graduate from the College of Nursing.
2. Students who earn a grade below C in a required NUR course must repeat the course and earn a grade of C or higher before progressing in the nursing curriculum. Approval to repeat the course is subject to space availability. The original grade will remain on the student's academic record and will count as the first unsuccessful attempt. Students are permitted one opportunity to repeat a required NUR course. Earning a grade below C in any subsequent required NUR course will result in dismissal from the College of Nursing. Students who earn grades below C in two required NUR courses during the same semester are not eligible to repeat either course and will be dismissed from the College of Nursing.

Dismissal Appeal Procedure & Policy, and Submission Deadlines

Students who are academically dismissed as outlined in the Academic Progression & Dismissal Policy above have the option to appeal.

1. Notification of Dismissal:

- a. Students will receive a letter from the Scholastic Standing Committee stating they have been academically dismissed from the College of Nursing. This will include the appeal process and submission deadlines.
2. Grounds for Appeal:
 - a. A student who has **extenuating** circumstances that affected his/her/their academic performance may submit an appeal letter.
3. Appeal Submission Requirements:
 - a. A formal letter requesting a waiver of dismissal.
 - b. An explanation of what contributed to poor academic success and any strategies used to try and overcome his/her/their dismissal.
 - c. A plan of intention describing what the student will do differently if allowed to continue in the nursing program.
 - d. Optional
 - i. Supporting documentation (e.g. health care provider note)
 - ii. Letters of support
4. Deadlines for appeal submission:
 - a. all appeal letters and documentation must be submitted to the Scholastic Standing Committee by the deadline identified in the official dismissal notification letter, typically within 5 calendar days. This letter will be emailed within two business days after grades are due (date located on the URI Official calendar).
 - b. Appeals received after the deadline will not be accepted. All appeals must be submitted via email to the Assistant Dean.
 - c. Extenuating circumstances that prevent the student from meeting the deadline will be considered on a case by case basis (e.g., injury, death, hospitalization).
5. Reinstatement Conditions:
 - a. If a student is granted reinstatement following an appeal, the student will progress in the nursing program on a space available basis only.
 - b. A student may appeal once during their undergraduate career.
 - c. Earning below a C in a subsequent required NUR course will result in automatic dismissal from the College of Nursing with no appeal.

Curricular Modifications or Exceptions

Student Requests for Curricular Modifications or Exceptions (Other than Request for Reasonable Accommodations based on a qualified student's disability, which shall follow the procedures outlined by the URI Office of Disability, Access, and Inclusion).

RN to BS students seeking exceptions to any University rule pertaining to their academic circumstances, including degree requirements and courses of study, shall do so by written petitions submitted to the College of Nursing Assistant Dean via email RNBSOnline@uri.edu. Students should follow the procedure below:

1. Complete all sections of the “substitution or waiver” form, located on the College of Nursing webpage.
2. Attach additional supporting information or documentation, if necessary.
3. Submit to the College of Nursing Assistant Dean for review by the Scholastic Standing Committee.
4. A written response from the Committee will be sent to the student within 10 business days.

Grading

The following grade chart is used for undergraduate NURSING courses:

A	93-100%
A-	90-92%
B+	87-89%
B	83-86%
B-	80-82%
C+	77-79%
C	73-76%
C-	70-72%
D+	67-69%
D	60-66%
F	below 60%

Grade Appeal Procedures

If the student thinks that a grade received in a particular course is incorrect, the student has the right to appeal the grade in the following procedure. [Note: The student must commence the appeal process within 5 calendar days of the posting of the grade, and if the appeal is taken to steps 2, 3 or 4, the student must commence each next step within two calendar days after the conclusion of the prior step]:

1. The student shall first discuss the grade with the Instructor
2. If still unresolved, the student may submit a written appeal to the Associate Dean, who will discuss the matter with the Instructor. If the Associate Dean believes the grade should be changed, and the Instructor does not agree to the change, the

Associate Dean shall issue a written decision to the student and the Instructor which includes his/her/their recommended grade change, and his/her/their reasons for recommending the change. If the Associate Dean does not believe the grade should be changed, he/she/they shall issue a written decision to the student and Instructor stating his/her/their conclusions and reasons.

3. If still unresolved, the student may make a second written appeal to the College of Nursing Scholastic Standing Committee. The Committee will provide the Instructor the opportunity to respond to the appeal, following which, unless the Instructor voluntarily agrees to make a grade change acceptable to the student, the Committee will issue a final decision on the matter, stating its conclusions and reasons. If the Committee decides that the grade should be changed over the objection of the Instructor, the grade shall be changed in the manner specified in the University Manual.

University Withdrawal (voluntary)

Students may withdraw from the College of Nursing and URI at any time. Students who wish to withdraw from the University and College of Nursing must complete the Withdrawal form found on the Enrollment Services website and forward to the Assistant Dean for signature via RNBSOnline@uri.edu.

Leave of Absence

Students may apply for a Leave of Absence from the College of Nursing and URI. Students must complete the Leave of Absence form found on the Enrollment Services webpage and are required to forward the form to RNBSOnline@uri.edu for approval. Students can take a leave of absence for no more than two consecutive semesters or 4 sessions.

Academic Conduct, Integrity & Professionalism

General Principles

Professional conduct is an essential expectation of nursing education and practice. Life in the academic community must be one of integrity, honesty, acceptance of responsibility, and a willingness to clearly and accurately represent oneself, one's work, and one's activities. The College of Nursing believes that professional conduct is critical to the practice of nursing, and fully supports the University policies. Students are expected to observe the standards of professional conduct and ethics in all course work and online interactions.

Failure to meet these standards will be treated as a failure to accept responsibility as a student and may make one subject to suspension or dismissal from the College of Nursing.

Incidents of academic dishonesty (including cheating and plagiarism), collusion (the assisting of another student in an act of dishonesty), and misrepresentation are prohibited.

The commission of illegal or unprofessional actions, such as violations of HIPPA or privacy regulations, illegal drug sale, possession or use, chemical impairment, violation of other state or federal laws, and sexual assault or sexual harassment, are also prohibited.

Students who violate the University's student conduct policies may be reported to the Office of Student Life, as indicated in the URI Student Handbook.

Please refer to the URI Student Handbook- <https://web.uri.edu/studentconduct/conduct-system/> the University Manual (8.27.10-8.27.20)-<https://web.uri.edu/manual/chapter-8/chapter-8-2/> , and the University Catalog - <http://web.uri.edu/catalog/> for the complete policy.

Involuntary Class or Clinical Withdrawals

Breach of professionalism is a serious offense which will be dealt with firmly. The College of Nursing reserves the right to remove (involuntarily withdraw) a student from a class or clinical for a minimum of one day or up to the remainder of the session in the event it is determined that a student's behavior, attitudes or actions violate essential program or professional standards or requirements, threaten harm to self or others, and/or indicate that the student is not fit to continue. In this event, students will be reported to the Office of Student Life.

The student will be required to attend a mandatory meeting with a College administrator to discuss the incident or problematic behavior.

Non-Academic Suspension or Dismissal from a Program

In the event it is determined that a student's behavior, attitudes, or actions violate essential program or professional standards or requirements and/or indicate that the student is not fit to continue in the program, the College may suspend or dismiss a student from their program. The College will normally provide notification to the student of the reasons for the contemplated suspension or dismissal and give the student an opportunity to address those reasons before the College deliberates and makes a final decision to suspend or dismiss the student. The nature of the opportunity provided to the student (e.g. a less formal meeting with a College administrator, or a more formal hearing before multiple College officials or a panel, etc.) will depend on the nature and duration of the sanction and the reasons for the contemplated suspension or dismissal and other relevant factors, provided however, that the College reserves the right to immediately suspend the student in the event that the student's immediate continuation in the program constitutes an imminent risk to the student or to other students in the program, or for other compelling reasons.

Formal Complaint Policy

This policy defines formal complaints submitted to the College of Nursing and establishes a procedure regarding the role of the student, college, and university in the review and resolution of such complaints. The College of Nursing adheres to all University policies.

A "formal complaint" under this policy is defined as any signed, written claim submitted to the College of Nursing by a student alleging discriminatory, improper, or arbitrary treatment.

No retaliation or adverse action shall be taken against any student for initiating, participating in, or refusing to participate in, a formal complaint.

PROCEDURE:

- Formal complaints involving an issue of Academic Integrity will fall under College of Nursing Procedures as outlined in this handbook.
- Complaints involving any other issue will be subject to other established

university policies and the official procedure established by the applicable university policy. Such policies include, but are not limited to:

- University of Rhode Island *Sexual Misconduct and Relationship Violence Complaint and Adjudication Process* (Student Handbook) and URI Policy #01.001.1 *Sexual Misconduct*
- University of Rhode Island *Complaint Procedures for Reporting Discrimination and/or Harassment*
- University of Rhode Island *Student Conduct System and Academic Honesty Procedures* and other related policies as listed in the University of Rhode Island *Student Handbook*, *Graduate Manual*, and *University Manual*

Upon receipt of a formal complaint that is subject to another university policy, the College of Nursing will either advise the student who submitted the formal complaint of the applicable university policy or refer the complaint directly to the appropriate university official, as it determines to be appropriate under the circumstances.

- Documentation of formal complaints and their disposition will be logged in a database, and shall be maintained as confidential and retained in the Office of the Dean of the College of Nursing consistent with University policies and Rhode Island State law. The log shall include:
 - The date the complaint was first formally submitted
 - The nature of the complaint
 - The steps taken to resolve the complaint
 - The School's final decision regarding the complaint
 - Any other external actions initiated by the student to resolve the complaint.

Diversity and Inclusion

Diversity can be conceptualized in different ways depending on the context. The College of Nursing conceptualizes diversity as understanding that each student brings unique experiences, strengths, and ideas to our classroom. These differences can be along dimensions of race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender, socioeconomic status, age, ability, veteran's status, religious or political beliefs, or other different ideologies. Diversity is the exploration and incorporation of these differences to enrich learning and in and out of our classrooms.

Each member of the University has the responsibility to foster an environment of acceptance, mutual respect and understanding. If you are a target or witness to a bias incident, you are encouraged to contact the URI Bias Response Team at <https://web.uri.edu/brt/>.

Social Media Policy

Social media, such as X, YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok etc. are to be used in adherence with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) The purpose of this policy is to maintain the protection of sensitive and confidential information and to uphold professionalism.

This policy applies to the use of mobile devices, social media and internet communications related to confidential information about the faculty, staff, students, classroom and clinical activities, patients, and clinical affiliates. CON students, faculty and staff must always protect individuals' rights to privacy and confidentiality and communicate sensitive and confidential information in accordance with all applicable laws, regulations, and policies (including the policies of clinical training sites), including whenever applicable the requirements of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

Members of the CON community are expected to observe the American Nurses Association's Principles for Social Media Principles Networking (American Nurses Association.)

ANA's Principles for Social Networking (<https://www.nursingworld.org/social/>)

1. Be aware of your audience. Make sure that the content of your posts is appropriate for the people who will be seeing it and may share it with others.
2. Maintain your professionalism. Avoid posting anything that could be considered unprofessional or inappropriate, such as photos or videos of patients.
3. Know your social media policy. Familiarize yourself with your employer's social media policy and adhere to it across all the social media platforms that you choose to use.
4. Secure your social media profiles. Review and set-up the respective privacy settings for the social media platforms that you choose to use.
5. Share credible information only. The dissemination of credible and reliable information protects the health and well-being of the public.
6. Engage with respectful content. Do not share content that is harmful, disparaging, racist, homophobic, or derogatory.

The policy requires that all:

- Be aware of the necessity of maintaining professional boundaries while using electronic media.
- Follow applicable HIPAA regulations at all times. Identifiable information concerning patients/clinical activities must not be posted in any online forum.

- Protect confidential, sensitive, and proprietary information. Do not share or post any information related to nurse-patient contact or about the College of Nursing.
- Do not post comments on social media sites about patients, clinical facilities, employees of facilities, faculty or other students as these posts violate the individual's right to privacy and may incur liability - even if the posts do not specifically identify individuals.
- Do not make disparaging remarks about patients, employers, or co-workers, even if they are not identified
- Do not use mobile devices to take photos or videos of patients or patient information.
- Use personal electronic devices only as authorized by faculty and clinical affiliates.
- Report any breach of confidentiality or privacy to a College of Nursing administrator or faculty member.

Violations of patient privacy will be subject to applicable HIPAA policies, procedures and sanctions, and may subject the student to other sanctions imposed by the College. Students who wrongly share confidential information, or otherwise engage in unprofessional communication, may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal from the Nursing program.

Accommodations for Qualified Students with Disabilities

Students are expected to notify faculty at the onset of the session if any reasonable accommodations are required in the online classroom or clinical setting. It is expected that the student will notify the faculty with the appropriate paperwork from the office of Disability, Access and Inclusion Office. Students are required to notify faculty of their accommodations seven days prior to quizzes and/or exams. (<http://web.uri.edu/disability/>).

Students who require accommodations in the clinical environment must set up a separate meeting with Disability, Access, and Inclusion to determine what accommodations are necessary to provide equal access. Reasonable accommodations cannot fundamentally alter the core requirements or technical standards of courses or clinical placements

Email Policy

All email communications to students by the College, or its faculty and staff, will be via the URI email system, with communications sent to the students' URI assigned email address. Students are also required to use their University of Rhode Island email account for all communications with College faculty or staff. Students are expected to frequently monitor their URI email as all URI and College of Nursing academic and clinical information is communicated in this manner.

Brightspace

All students will be added to the CON RN-BS Online Student Resources Brightspace site. Important information such as registration announcements, class offerings, job postings and graduation information will be shared through this site. It is important that you become familiar with Brightspace and check the College of Nursing site frequently.

Importance of Surveys to the URI College of Nursing

Please note that all surveys sent by the College of Nursing, Graduate School, Center for Career and Experiential Education, and URI or other entities within URI, including those sent after program completion/graduation are pertinent to the College of Nursing's national accreditation and for URI's accreditation. The College of Nursing encourages all graduates to complete these surveys when received.

These surveys individually and collectively capture an array of data that are used to inform future curricula development, resources to help students, and to meet requirements set by the College's national accreditor, the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE). For all CCNE accredited nursing programs, please remember that licensure, certification, and other outcomes are directly related to accreditation. If we do not meet the requirements set by our national accreditors due to a lack of data, it puts the College of Nursing's baccalaureate, master's, DNP and post-graduate APRN certificate programs in an undesirable position for all students, alumni, faculty, and staff. This is why we highly encourage students and alumni to take surveys and below are some key highlights of what is directly connected to accreditation via CCNE.

What CCNE accredited programs offer:

- **Financial Aid:** Students at accredited schools are eligible for federal loans and grants, as noted by the [U.S. Department of Education](#).
- **Quality Assurance:** Ensures the curriculum, faculty, and resources meet established, high-quality standards.
- **Licensure & Exam Eligibility:** Most state boards of nursing require graduation from an accredited program to sit for the NCLEX-RN exam and apply for registered nurse licensure. The same is required for qualifying to take national certification exams for nurse practitioner specialties, and then subsequently to apply for nurse practitioner licensure.

- **Employment Opportunities:** Many hospitals and employers prefer or require graduates from [CCNE-accredited programs](#).
- **Academic Advancement:** Accreditation is often required for transferring credits or pursuing advanced degrees (MSN, DNP).
- **Public Safety:** Ensures nurses are trained to provide safe, competent care no matter where they are practicing as a registered nurse, nurse practitioner or in leadership roles.