

**Westfield State University  
Department of Nursing & Allied Health  
College of Professional Studies**

**RN-BSN Program**



**Addendum to the  
Westfield State Nursing Student Handbook**

This Handbook Addendum provides you with information about the Department, the curriculum and policies specific to the RN to BSN program. The policies in the Westfield State University Undergraduate Nursing Handbook serve as the overarching policies for all Nursing students enrolled in programs of nursing study – please refer to this document for more detail.

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## Welcome to the RN-BSN Program at Westfield State University

Dear Westfield State University RN-BSN Nursing Student:

The RN-BSN Program at Westfield State University recognizes registered nurses as adult learners and active professionals. We seek to provide you with an experience that will help you not only advance your degree but also meet your personal learning preferences. Ours is a student-centered program that is flexible and respectful of the unique skill and talent you bring to the program. We have designed our program to include necessary components required in a nursing curriculum; however, we believe objectives should be met with critical thinking and creativity. We encourage and expect our learners to be self-directed and actively involved in learning.

The Nursing faculty and staff at Westfield State University are committed to assisting you throughout the learning process. We look forward to having you as a student in the RN to BSN Nursing Program.

*Jamie Rivera, PhD, RN*

Jamie Rivera, PhD, RN  
Nursing Department Chair

*Jessica Holden*

Jessica Holden DNP, RN-BC  
Associate Dean of Nursing

## **PROGRAM OVERVIEW**

The purpose of the RN to BSN program is to build upon the foundation of previous nursing education at the associate degree. The BSN degree for RNs expands knowledge and skills using both a teaching and outcomes assessment model and developed according to Massachusetts Nurse of the Future Core Competencies and The Essentials of Baccalaureate Education for Professional Nursing Practice from the American Association of Colleges of Nursing.

## **CRITERIA FOR ADMISSION**

- Current unencumbered RN license
- Completion of an associates' degree nursing program with a minimum GPA of 2.75 (candidates below standard may be admitted at the discretion of the department Chair)
- Completed WSU application
- Official transcripts from all universities/colleges attended
- One academic or professional recommendation

## **CURRICULUM**

### **NURS0301 Professional Nursing: Concepts & Issues in a Globalized Healthcare (3 Credits)**

- This course integrates the student into baccalaureate education and focuses on trends, issues, and evolution of the nursing profession. A major focus of this course is for the students to critically think about the nursing profession, its historical and theoretical frameworks, moral and legal issues, and standards of nursing practice. Additionally, the course provides the opportunity to explore the challenge of providing care to an increasingly diverse population and the influence of culture on the role of the professional nurse.

**NURS0302 Advanced Health (4 Credits)** – The course designed to assist RN-BSN students to refine health history taking, psychosocial assessment, physical assessment skills and clinical reasoning in the assessment of diverse patients across the life span. Content builds on basic and experimental knowledge of health assessment. Emphasis is placed on applying critical thinking and diagnostic reasoning skills in assessing and identifying the problem symptoms and abnormal findings, and the linking of findings to underlying pathophysiology. 2 hours lecture/ 2 hours lab.

**NURS0303 Quality Improvement and Intra- and Inter Professional Collaboration (3 Credits)** – This course focuses on quality and patient safety management in the U.S. health care system using continuous quality improvement. Topics to be examined include the history of quality, trends in health care quality and patient safety, measurement of quality, analysis of variation and quality practices in different health care environments, administrative responsibilities and structures with respect to production and service quality. Additionally, this course considers the role of intra- and inter- professional collaboration in quality.

**NURS 0307 The Business of Nursing (3 Credits)** – This course is a comprehensive approach to nursing care delivery systems. It provides the student with an understanding of processes in

health systems and organizations and of the responsibilities involved in maintaining a well-managed health care organization. Students will examine historical evolutions of the health care industry, organizational theory, organizational performance, principles of healthcare economics, financing, third party reimbursement, and the influence of accreditation, regulatory agencies, information systems, and health care policy on the delivery of nursing care services.

**NURS0305 Nursing Research (3 Credits)** – Focuses on nursing research and its impact on evidence-based nursing practice. Addresses research terminology, defining researchable nursing problems, identifying variables, hypothesis development and testing and sample selection as well as evaluation of findings. A major component of this course will be discussion of the nurse as the consumer of research. Additionally, the utilization of critical thinking skills will be emphasized to analyze research findings. Students also will be encouraged to explore nursing research that addresses clinical problems in their own nursing practice.

**NURS0309 Community Health (5 Credits)** – Identifies current nursing concepts and focuses on their application in public health and community settings with individuals, families and at-risk populations. The dynamics of health promotion and prevention as impacted by global, societal and cultural influences will be explored. A variety of community agencies will be utilized.

**NURS0353 Nursing Leadership (3 Credits)** – Focuses on the role of the professional nurse in a leadership/management position. The course examines how the professional nurse works collaboratively within the structure of a healthcare organization. Emphasis will be on leadership and organizational theories and their relationship to managing people, positive problem solving/decision making, conflict resolution, appropriate delegation and effective communication with all members of the health care team. The use of self- assessment to facilitate the development of leadership/management skills will be incorporated.

**NURS0396 Nursing Capstone Clinical Internship (6 Credits)** – Provides an opportunity to assume a professional nursing role under the auspices of a qualified nurse preceptor. This capstone experience focuses on synthesizing advanced nursing concepts and utilizing complex decision making in an individualized clinical environment. Emphasis will be on preparing to transition to competent and confident baccalaureate professional nurse. This course provides students with the opportunity to utilize and concepts of professional nursing at the baccalaureate level. It is also a synthesis of acquired knowledge from all previous courses in the RN-BSN program with the intent to expand and competently apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to transition into a leadership role in professional practice

## **RN to BSN PROGRAM OPTIONS**

### **RN to BSN Track 1 (12 months)**

<b>Session 1 Fall</b>		<b>Session 2 Spring</b>		<b>Session 3 Summer</b>	
NURS 0301 (3)	Professional Nursing: Concepts and Issues in a Globalized Healthcare	NURS 0305 (3)	Nursing Research	NURS 0354 (3)	Nursing Leadership
NURS 0303 (3)	Quality Improvement and Intra- and Inter-Professional Collaboration	NURS 0307 (3)	The Business of Nursing	NURS 0396 (6)	Nursing Capstone / Clinical Internship Track
NURS 0309 (5)	Community Health Nursing	NURS 0302 (4)	Advanced Health Assessment		
<b>Total credits (11)</b>		<b>Total credits (10)</b>		<b>Total credits (9)</b>	

### **RN to BSN Track 2 (15 months)**

<b>Session 1 Spring</b>		<b>Session 2 Summer</b>		<b>Session 3 Fall</b>		<b>Session 4 Spring</b>	
NURS 0305 (3)	Nursing Research	NURS 0354 (3)	Nursing Leadership	NURS 0301 (3)	Professional Nursing: Concepts and Issues in a Globalized Healthcare	NURS 0396 (6)	Nursing Capstone / Clinical Internship Track
NURS 0307 (3)	The Business of Nursing			NURS 0303 (3)	Quality Improvement and Intra- and Inter-Professional Collaboration		
NURS 0302 (4)	Advanced Health Assessment			NURS 0309 (5)	Community Health Nursing		
<b>Total credits (10)</b>		<b>Total credits (3)</b>		<b>Total credits (11)</b>		<b>Total credits (6)</b>	

**RN to BSN Track 3 (part time – 24 months)**

<b>Session 1 Spring</b>		<b>Session 2 Summer</b>		<b>Session 3 Fall</b>		<b>Session 4 Spring</b>	
NURS 0305 (3)	Nursing Research	NURS 0354 (3)	Nursing Leadership	NURS 0301 (3)	Professional Nursing: Concepts and Issues in a Globalized Healthcare	NURS 0302 (4)	Advanced Health Assessment
NURS 0307 (3)	The Business of Nursing			NURS 0303 (3)	Quality Improvement and Intra- and Inter-Professional Collaboration		
<b>Total credits (6)</b>		<b>Total credits (3)</b>		<b>Total credits (6)</b>		<b>Total credits (4)</b>	
<b>Session 5 Fall</b>		<b>Session 6 Spring</b>					
NURS 0309 (5)	Community Health Nursing	NURS 0396 (6)	Nursing Capstone / Clinical Internship Track				
<b>Total credits (5)</b>		<b>Total credits (6)</b>					

MATH 0108 (Elementary Statistics) is required prior to enrollment in NURS 0305 Nursing Research

## **COMMUNITY COLLEGE ARTICULATION AGREEMENTS**

Westfield State has articulation agreements with Springfield Technical, Holyoke, and Greenfield Community Colleges. Pathway tools have been developed and are available for students and advisors to use to guide course selection in the ADN program to maximize the potential for credit transfer and minimize the enrollment in courses that do not meet WSU's Core Studies (below)

A total of 60 credits composed of nursing and liberal arts and science courses taken at another accredited two-year educational institution, if evaluated by the Registrar as equivalent to those offered at Westfield State University, are acceptable in transfer. For those who graduated from an associate's degree program with an existing articulation agreement, further transfer credits may apply.

## **CORE OF STUDIES**

In addition to nursing courses in the major, the following core of studies or equivalent must be completed prior to graduation with a baccalaureate degree in nursing:

Required non-nursing courses (core and noncore) - 31 credits

[BIOL 0223 - Microbiology](#)

or BIOL 0209 - Medical Microbiology Credits: 4

[BIOL 0237 - Human Anatomy and Physiology I](#)

[BIOL 0239 - Human Anatomy and Physiology II](#)

[CHEM 0103 - Chemistry of the Life Sciences](#)

or any Chemistry course listed under "Allied Science" or "Lab Science" Common Core.

[MATH 0108 - Elementary Statistics](#)

[PSYC 0101 - Introduction to Psychology](#)

[SOCI 0101 - Principles of Sociology](#)

Any Psychology or Sociology course beyond 0101 listed under "Social Understanding" Common Core



## **RN to BSN STUDENTS WITH NETC STATUS**

Westfield State University offers the RN-to-BSN degree-completion program, according to terms of the statewide Nursing Education Transfer Compact (NETC). The NETC offers preferential admission to transfer students who earn an Associate Degree in Nursing (ADN) with a minimum 2.75 cumulative grade point average from the Mass. community college system, complete the 34-credit MassTransfer Block, and pass the NCLEX-RN exam prior to enrolling at Westfield. The RN-to-BSN degree-completion program is housed exclusively in Westfield's College of Graduate and Continuing Education (CGCE).

Under terms of the NETC, qualified students will receive up to 90 transfer credits for the ADN degree, which will apply directly toward requirements for the bachelor's degree as a body of knowledge and practical experience that is pre-requisite to upper-division course work required of licensed Registered Nurses.

To earn the bachelor's degree, NETC students are required to complete the following: 30 credits (semester hours) of upper-division Nursing major courses; outstanding non- Nursing major courses; up to 6 general education core credits, and any elective credits that may be required to reach minimum degree and residency requirements.

### **Key elements of the NETC include:**

- Applicants are exempted from submitting an application fee and essay. They may submit the MassTransfer Enrollment form in lieu of the Westfield State Division of Graduate & Continuing Education application form, no earlier than one semester prior to their planned enrollment term.
- Applicants receive preferential admission placement on a space-available basis with a minimum 2.75 cumulative average earned at the time of application. Due to space limitations in the major, a priority application-completion deadline of February 1 has been established for fall semester NETC applicants.
- Admitted students receive full transfer and applicability of up to 90 credit hours of course work, without time restriction, in a completed BORN-approved ADN degree at a Massachusetts community college.
- Admitted students also receive additional transfer credits for outstanding MassTransfer Block courses taken at the community college subsequent to completion of the ADN, but prior to enrollment in the RN-to-BSN program and according to terms of the MassTransfer policy. The number of courses required to complete the 34-credit MassTransfer Block beyond the ADN curriculum varies among the community colleges, generally between 3 and 6 courses or 9 and 18 credits. *Special note: courses required to complete the MassTransfer Block that are not part of the ADN curriculum are not eligible for financial aid.*
- The maximum number of credit hours required for post-transfer completion of the RN-to-BSN under the NETC includes satisfactory completion of 30 credit hours of upper-division Nursing course work, any outstanding related major course credits, up to 6 credits/2 courses of MassTransfer Block Plus-6 general education core requirements, and any elective credits that may be required to reach minimum degree and residency requirements.
- A maximum total of 121 credits will be required to earn the RN-to-BSN degree, **unless** additional

specific course work in the major is required of all other RN-to- BSN/native students at Westfield State.

Questions regarding the RN-to-BSN application process and terms of the statewide NETC policy should be directed to the Westfield State College of Graduate & Continuing Education at (413) 572-8020.

RN-to-BSN program, academic advising, and other related questions should be directed to faculty office in the Department of Nursing at (413) 572-8440

### **PROGRAM COMPLETION**

Enrolled students must complete the program within 5 years. Exceptions to this may be made at the discretion of the Nursing Department Chair.

### **COURSE FORMAT AND PROCESS**

The RN to BSN courses are held in an online synchronous format which is a combination of online discussion, engagement, and assignment submission. While the program does require minimal face to face sessions, these sessions are offered via remote technology.

### **STUDENT POLICIES**

Except where differentiated in this handbook, RN to BSN students will follow the student policies (e.g. conduct, integrity, professional dress) outlined in the Westfield State University Undergraduate Nursing Handbook and in addition will comply with the following:

#### **1. Personal Liability Insurance**

Students are encouraged to carry professional malpractice. Currently, the University provides this personal liability coverage for all nursing students. If this University coverage should change, students will be responsible for purchasing their own professional liability insurance.

#### **2. Licensure / Certification**

Registered Nurse students are required to hold a current RN license in good standing, as well as current American Heart Association BLS CPR certification.

#### **3. Practicum Experiences**

As practicing nurses, RN to BSN students are expected to engage in appropriate experiences for practicum course experiences. In effort to create a learning experience that aligns with the RN to BSN student's professional goals, responsibility is placed on the student to self-identify practicum sites and preceptors and to provide the WSU Clinical Coordinator with this information, as well as the contact information for the site.

NURS0396 Nursing Capstone includes independent learning hours. To solidify placement contracts and submit required information to practicum sites, students are expected to provide the

information listed above to the Clinical Coordinator as follows:

- For spring semester placements - No later than the end of week 8 fall semester
- For summer semester placements - No later than the end of week 8 spring semester
- For fall semester placements - No later than July 31

In addition to providing site, preceptor and contact information; the student will also be required to provide the Clinical Coordinator with necessary health information and to complete a CORI check with the University.