



SMSU RN to BSN Student Handbook

2024-2025

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(Please Note: The Student Handbook is subject to changes at any time)

Welcome

Welcome to the Southwest Minnesota State University (SMSU) RN to BSN student handbook. The following handbook will inform students about the RN to BSN Program, designed for two-year associate degree registered nurses (RNs) or three-year diploma degree RNs seeking a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN).

The courses in the RN to BSN Program are 100% online except for the experiential (clinical) learning experience component which may be completed within your home communities. Graduates from the RN to BSN Program will possess leadership and management skills as well as critical thinking skills needed to advance their careers. The RN to BSN Program is accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE). Students may apply to register as a Public Health Nurse in Minnesota upon graduation.

Effective March 21, 2023, the RN-BSN nursing program at Southwest Minnesota State University in Marshall, MN, is a candidate for initial accreditation by the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing. This candidacy status expires on March 21, 2025.

Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN)
3390 Peachtree Road NE, Suite 1400 Atlanta, GA 30326
(404) 975-5000

View the public information disclosed by the ACEN regarding this candidate program [on the ACEN's website](#).

Students accepted into the program can start their nursing courses during the fall or spring semesters. If students need additional courses, including Liberal Education courses, during the RN to BSN Program, they will be advised appropriately.

Application to the SMSU RN to BSN Program is as follows:

Admission Requirements

1. [Apply for admission to SMSU](#)
2. [RN to BSN Nursing Application Process](#)

Additional Admission Requirements

- Undergraduate Nursing GPA of 2.30 or greater
- Current, unencumbered RN License (Associate Degree students may apply during their nursing program, with acceptance into the program contingent upon successful completion of the NCLEX-RN exam and nursing licensure).

NOTE: No admission examination required and no NCLEX exam required upon graduation.

For additional information, visit our website at

<https://www.smsu.edu/academics/programs/nursingrntobsn/index.html>

We look forward to partnering with you in reaching your educational goals. Please contact the SMSU RN to BSN Program at NursingDept@SMSU.edu or 507-537-7591 if you have any further questions.

Dr. Lindsay Rohlik, Department Chair
Dr. Tracy Hadler, Director of Nursing

Preface

The SMSU RN to BSN Program is designed for working RNs, allowing flexibility for students to take courses at their own pace.

SMSU Mission Statement

SMSU prepares students to meet the complex challenges of this century as engaged citizens in their local and global communities. Our comprehensive degree programs, taught in the liberal arts tradition, are dedicated to connecting students' academic and practical professional development experiences in southwestern Minnesota to the wider world.

SMSU Vision Statement

SMSU aspires to be recognized throughout Minnesota and beyond for being an inclusive and student-centered university.

SMSU Value Statement

We value:

1. Discovery through innovative teaching, research, and other high-impact experiences.
2. Civic engagement and strategic partnerships.
3. Developing broadly educated and well-rounded leaders.

Southwest Minnesota State University views itself as a community and expects that each community member will become familiar with the standards of the community and assume responsibility for making decisions governing their behavior within this community. The SMSU Student Handbook is intended to provide the student with information about services available at the University and University procedures and should be used as a reference for basic University expectations. Updates, as they occur during the year, will be made to the handbook on the SMSU website. SMSU Student Handbook is available at <http://www.smsu.edu/administration/studenthandbook/>

Introduction

The RN to BSN Program (Bachelor of Science in Nursing) nursing curriculum was designed to provide a broad base of principles from science and liberal arts, including additional specialized courses in leadership and management, healthcare delivery systems and informatics, community and public health nursing, health promotion,

nursing research, and evidence-based practice. Nursing care is based on professional standards, ethics, competencies, and knowledge drawn from the natural, social, medical sciences, and the humanities, as well as nursing's own body of knowledge. Professional nursing supports research and a commitment to lifelong learning to expand nursing knowledge and its use within the profession. To ensure the program's quality and integrity, the RN to BSN Program follows two standards, Quality Improvement and Safety, endorsed by the *Quality and Safety Education in Nursing (QSEN) Core Competencies* (QSEN Institute, 2020) and the SMSU RN to BSN Guiding Philosophical Concepts. The RN students come to the program with real-world experiences and pre-existing abilities that are a foundation for their learning in and out of the classroom. The BSN graduate embraces the nursing profession as a nurse generalist with a strong foundation for developing specialized experiential (clinical) practice and other advanced practice roles. The BSN graduate is prepared to function effectively in ambiguous, unpredictable, and complex environments; demonstrate critical thinking and flexibility; and translate, integrate, and apply knowledge to enhance patient care quality and safety.

Alignment of Mission with University Mission and Program Goals

The RN to BSN Program adheres to and supports the mission and values of SMSU.

SMSU RN to BSN Program Mission

The mission of the RN to BSN Program is to provide leadership in nursing education, scholarship, and practice that reflects cultural, ethical, and compassionate presence in the preparation of nurses that will serve with excellence in a diverse and ever-changing society.

SMSU RN to BSN Program Goal Statement

Graduates of the RN to BSN program develop a holistic synthesis of the nursing process, knowledge, skills, and attitudes for professional nursing practice. Graduates combine critical thinking, leadership skills, lifelong learning, healthcare information technology, community nursing process, and effective communication skills to provide nursing care for individuals, and families in rural/urban settings, global communities, and populations. The BSN graduate integrates liberal arts, culturally congruent care, nursing knowledge, evidence-based practice, and interprofessional collaboration with the healthcare team and community stakeholders through caring and ethical nursing practice. The graduate practices person-centered care, incorporating health promotion including self-care, preventative care, and safety to promote quality outcomes for all persons.

Program Terms/Definitions

Individual: a single person with unique experiences, backgrounds, and values who is one member of a larger group.

Families: a group of people who may be biologically, legally, or socially related.

Local/Global Communities: a group of people who have a similarity in geography, religion, interests, race, etc. The local community is geographically near where the global community is worldwide. For example, members of a specific church are a local community. A community includes an interactive relationship with others in the group.

Local/Global Populations: a group of people who have a trait or factor in common. For example, all people with heart disease in the state of Minnesota (local population). A population may not have a relationship with others in the group or interact with others within the group. For example, people with heart disease in Minnesota may not know others that also live in Minnesota and have heart disease, much less interact with the individuals. (Interactions and relationships are key differences.)

Knowledge is the condition of being familiar with content through an experience ([Merriam-Webster](#), 2022).

Skills are the act of using knowledge effectively to perform or do something ([Merriam-Webster](#), 2022).

Attitudes are mental states, feelings, and emotions regarding a fact or state ([Merriam-Webster](#), 2022).

Health promotion is the advancement or furthering of human health states ([World Health Organization](#), 2022).

Lifelong Learning is an ongoing practice of self-regulated learning and development throughout life ([Oxford Handbook](#), 2022).

End of Program Student Learning Outcomes

EOPSLO #1: Build the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of the baccalaureate prepared nurse as described within the Scope & Standards of Practice and Nursing Code of Ethics. (**Courses:** NURS300, NURS450)

EOPSLO#2 Value diversity when planning equitable and inclusive person-centered care. (**Courses:** NURS310, NURS450)

EOPSLO #3: Support person centered care through inter- and intra-professional collaborative processes. (**Courses:** NURS410, NURS440, NURS450)

EOPSLO #4: Examine evidence to optimize health, safety, and quality outcomes. (**Courses:** NURS360, NURS390, NURS434, NURS435, NURS450)

EOPSLO #5: Evaluate informatics and technology to support optimal health outcomes. (**Courses:** NURS420, NURS450)

EOPSLO#6: Value social determinants of health in the nursing process application to provide person-centered care.

(Courses: NURS320, NURS400, NURS437, NURS450)

Code of Ethics for Nurses

The Department of Nursing faculty subscribes to the American Nurses Association (ANA) Code of Ethics for Nurses (2015). Students are expected to learn and perform in accordance with this code.

Course Descriptions

NURS 300 Transitions to Baccalaureate Nursing (3 cr)

This course serves to assist the registered nurse in the transition to baccalaureate nursing practice. Growth as a BSN-prepared nurse surfaces through topics that will be examined surrounding professional nursing practice, Nursing Standards of Practice, ethical comportment, advocacy, evidence-based practice with statistical literacy, and nursing competencies. Admission to the RN to BSN Program required. The Department of Nursing reserves the right to remove students from the course who do not meet the course requirements and prerequisites. This course is the first NURS course taken in the SMSU RN to BSN Program. It may be taken alone or in conjunction with other NURS courses. This course must be successfully completed prior to taking further NURS courses in future semesters.

NURS 310 Transcultural Nursing (3 cr)

This course builds on previously acquired nursing knowledge, skills, and attitudes to holistically assess and plan care for culturally diverse individuals, families, and groups. Students examine the use of Transcultural Nursing frameworks to guide the nursing process. Pre-requisite: Admission to the RN to BSN Program. The Department of Nursing reserves the right to remove students from the course who do not meet the course requirements and prerequisites.

NURS 320 Chronic Illness in Rural Settings (3 cr)

Students will explore factors that impact the individual, family, community, and health care systems in a rural setting. Chronic illness, end-of-life care, ethical issues, person-centered care, as well as social determinants of health are explored. Admission to the RN to BSN Program is required. Pre-requisite: The Department of Nursing reserves the right to remove students from the course who do not meet the course requirements and prerequisites. This course must be successfully completed prior to taking NURS 434.

NURS 360 Pathophysiology (3 cr)

This course will explore patterns of illness and wellness in the individual. Concepts related to pathophysiology will be explored. Health promotion and disease prevention are highlighted. The impact of genomics, lifestyle, and social determinants of health are addressed. Content in this course builds upon previous knowledge of natural sciences. Pre-requisite: Admission to the RN to BSN Program required. The Department of Nursing reserves the right to remove students from the course who do not meet the course requirements and prerequisites.

NURS 390 Evidence-Based Practice (3 cr)

This course introduces students to scientific inquiry in the discipline of nursing. Students study the basic foundation of the nursing research process. The overview includes the steps in the research process, research designs, research methodology, data collection, analysis, ethical conduct related to human research, lifelong learning, and evidence-based practice in nursing. The emphasis is placed on developing students as effective consumers of research. Pre-requisite: Admission to the RN to BSN Program. The Department of Nursing reserves the right to remove students from the course who do not meet the course requirements and prerequisites. This course must be successfully completed prior to taking NURS 435 or NURS 437.

NURS 400 Prevention and Population Health (3 cr)

This course focuses on nursing leadership and management concepts in the contemporary healthcare environment. Students will engage in the exploration and discovery of challenges facing the emerging nurse leader. Leadership skills will be developed leading to the creation of initiatives to provide safe, quality care that impact communities or healthcare organizations. Pre-requisite: Admission to the RN to BSN Program. The Department of Nursing reserves the right to remove students from the course who do not meet the course requirements and prerequisites.

NURS 410 Public/Community Health Experiential Nursing Learning Seminar (1 cr)

Students will work with the course faculty to determine public/community health experiential nursing learning experiences. Students will collaborate with community partners and health agencies to assess populations, develop health promotion projects, provide health education, and assist vulnerable populations within communities to maintain optimal health. Pre-requisite: Admission to the RN to BSN Program is required. The Department of Nursing reserves the right to remove students from the course who do not meet the course requirements and prerequisites. This course must be successfully completed prior to taking NURS 450.

NURS 420 Healthcare Policy and Informatics (3 cr)

Students in this course analyze the historical and current factors that impact healthcare systems and population health. Students examine healthcare policies and information technology (informatics) as they influence the nature and function of nursing practice related to safe, person-centered care, and self-care. Students examine the connection between interprofessional collaboration, healthcare policy, and informatics. Pre-requisite: Admission to the RN to BSN program. The Department of Nursing reserves the right to remove students from the course who do not meet the course requirements and prerequisites.

NURS 440 Organizational and Systems Leadership (3 cr)

Students in this course focus on nursing leadership and management concepts in the contemporary healthcare environment. Students will engage in the exploration and discovery of challenges facing the emerging nurse leader. Students develop leadership skills related to providing safe, quality care for communities and healthcare organizations. Pre-requisite: Admission to the RN to BSN Program. The Department of Nursing reserves the right to remove students from the course who do not meet the course requirements and prerequisites.

NURS 450 Public/Community Health Experiential Nursing Learning (3 cr) Students in this public/community health experiential nursing learning course study the baccalaureate nursing leadership role in population health settings. Students partner with community agencies to apply and evaluate the population-focused nursing process. Students consider disease prevention and practice levels, community assessment, and interprofessional collaboration in various community settings to promote optimal health. Students explore a variety of community-based settings that promote and advocate for healthy outcomes for individuals, families, communities, and populations. Prerequisite: Admission to the RN to BSN Program. Completion of NURS 400 and NURS 410. The Department of Nursing reserves the right to remove students from the course who do not meet the course requirements and prerequisites.

Nursing Elective: NURS 434 Care of the Rural Population (2 cr)

This course provides an advanced analysis of rural health care disparities, disparities of health for the rural population, along with strategies to care for the rural population. Areas of emphasis will include unique demographics of the rural population, nursing theories applied to vulnerable populations, recruitment and retention issues for rural healthcare, and challenges facing rural hospitals. Pre-requisite: NURS 320 Chronic Illness in Rural Settings and Admission to the RN to BSN Program required. The Department of Nursing reserves the right to remove students from the course who do not meet the course requirements and prerequisites.

Nursing Elective: NURS 435 Clinical Reasoning and Judgment (2 cr)

This course assists the registered nurse in enhancing and improving critical thinking, clinical judgment, and clinical reasoning skills. Emphasis is the application of clinical reasoning skills to a quality improvement project. The nurse uses interprofessional collaboration to promote change and improve health outcomes. Pre-requisite: Admission to the RN to BSN Program and NURS 390 or 430 Evidence-Based Practice. The Department of Nursing reserves the right to remove students from the course who do not meet the course requirements and prerequisites.

Nursing Elective: NURS 437 Mental Health Nursing (2 cr)

This course focuses on an introduction to theories and concepts of behavioral health nursing, psychopathy, and treatment modalities related to the nursing care of clients and their families. This course is designed to provide the learner with basic knowledge and a skill set that will enable them to function in the clinical environment as they provide, manage, and coordinate care when working with clients and families experiencing disturbances in mental health. Admission to the Nursing Program required. Prerequisite: NURS 390.

[RN to BSN Program of Study](#)

Click on the hyperlink to access the Program of Study for part-time or full-time examples.

Application Deadlines

Nursing applications are available for the fall and spring semesters. Applications are considered in the order they are received after acceptance requirements have been met completely. Applications expire two years from their completion date.

Students admitted to SMSU, but not yet enrolled in the RN to BSN Program, may take non-nursing courses while applying to the RN to BSN Program. The RN to BSN Program accepts students who live in a state in which SMSU has the authorization to grant a degree, as well as meet state board of nursing experiential (clinical) learning requirements.

Notification of Decision

The RN to BSN Program will notify applicants of their standing upon completion of acceptance requirements. Students are admitted as they meet the acceptance requirements. Students will receive an acceptance, provisional acceptance, or non-acceptance notification by email and U.S. mail.

RN to BSN Departmental Acceptance Requirements

Selection Criteria

The RN to BSN Program values the applicant's unique experiences along with their academic achievements. Considering the broad range of factors that reflect on the applicant's academic readiness, the following are the requirements needed for acceptance into SMSU's RN to BSN Program. Requirements include:

1. Apply for admission to SMSU.
2. Completion of RN to BSN Program application (application expires two years from the completion date).
3. Current, unencumbered RN License (Associate Degree students may apply during their nursing program, with acceptance in the program contingent upon successful completion of the NCLEX-RN exam and nursing licensure).
4. Achievement of a nursing GPA of 2.30 or above.
5. Students newly admitted in the RN to BSN Program may choose to move their admission date to a future semester (if their application has not expired by that start date).

Provisional acceptance into the RN to BSN Program will be considered for students not achieving the required nursing GPA of 2.30 or greater (GPA completion of a previous nursing degree program). Prior to applying to the RN to BSN Program Director of Nursing, the student may submit an appeal, in writing, to the RN to BSN Program Director stating past experiences while taking nursing courses and future plans to be successful. The appeal letter should include the reason for the appeal request, an explanation of previous experiences leading to nursing GPA, objectives of being accepted into the RN to BSN Program, and a plan for success in the RN to BSN Program. The Nursing Admissions Committee, comprised of the Department of Nursing Chair and the RN to BSN Program Director, Nursing Student Services Coordinator, Registrar's representative, and/or student advisor/faculty member, will review the appeal. Students who are provisionally accepted into the program must meet with the Nursing Student Services Coordinator to set up a plan for success and advising/study plan.

Progression Policy

Nursing students must maintain an overall GPA of 2.0 and attain a minimum grade of 2.0 in all courses required in the RN to BSN Program. Any nursing course (indicated by NURS) may be retaken once to attain a grade of 2.0. The student may not retake or withdraw from more than two nursing courses. Nursing students must complete the RN to BSN Program within seven years from the first term the student enrolls in the RN to BSN Program (a total of seven spring and seven fall semesters, including any study leave time). Students may appeal the seven-year completion time, given an unusual and significant situation is present. The appeal request includes the student writing a letter of appeal to the RN to BSN Director. The appeal will be reviewed by the Nursing Admissions Committee under the direction of the RN to BSN Program Director.

The student may not progress in the RN to BSN Program if -

- If it becomes necessary for the student to retake or withdraw from *more than two* nursing courses.
- The student is unable to maintain an acceptable unencumbered RN license, demonstrate successful completion of a Minnesota Department of Human Services background study, and provide current HIPAA training, CPR certification, and medical provider examination including health history, vaccinations, and tuberculosis documentation prior to the capstone course.
- The student is removed from their (clinical) experiential learning experience setting related to safety or criminal situation.
- Not taking any courses (NURS or general courses) during the spring or fall semester and has not requested a Study Leave.
- The student does not meet all policies stated in the most recent edition of the RN to BSN Student and SMSU's Student Handbook.

Study Leave Request

- The purpose of the Study Leave Request is to allow the nursing student to remain in the RN to BSN Program while not enrolled in courses relevant to the BSN degree.
- Students enrolled in the RN to BSN Program may request a Study Leave Request for the spring or fall semester (no study leave is required for the summer semester).
- For a Study Leave Request to be granted, the student must complete the Study Leave Request Form and have a study leave request advising session with their advisor to discuss future plans.
- During a Study Leave, the student is responsible for *having at least one* general advising session with their advisor to plan for the upcoming semester.
- A student may only request one 15/16-week semester of Study Leave Request at a time.
- Throughout the RN to BSN Program, a student may request a maximum of two individual 15/16-week semesters of Study Leave Requests total, which may be concurrent. This will require the completion of two separate Study Leave Requests.
- If the Study Leave Request process is not completed at the beginning of a semester, and the student is no longer enrolled in RN to BSN Program course work, the student will be considered withdrawn from the RN to BSN Program (no longer progressing in the RN to BSN Program).
- The RN to BSN Program will automatically withdraw the student from future NURS courses if the student is no longer progressing in the RN to BSN Program by not taking any courses (excluding the summer semester) and not requesting Study Leave.

Readmission

Students who are no longer progressing in the RN to BSN Program may apply to seek readmission to the program. Then, the student will be asked to send a letter of appeal to

the RN to BSN Program Director of Nursing. Requested in the letter of appeal will include:

- The student's Plan for Success – setting up a meeting with the Nursing Student Services Coordinator, or faculty advisor, to establish a plan for success, providing information regarding the circumstances/reason(s) for non-progression in the nursing major (i.e., death of a loved one, personal or family reasons, etc.) or due to low GPA.
- The course(s) do not meet grading criteria and grades attained in those courses.
- A description of how the student plans to be successful in the future

The Nursing Admission Committee will review the student's appeal for readmission. The Director of Nursing will send a letter of approval or disapproval to the student. The letter will indicate any stipulations for re-admission (e.g., medical provider clearance, other pertinent evidence) and progression in the RN to BSN Program. The student seeking readmission to the program will need to complete the RN to BSN Program application and will demonstrate an unencumbered RN license. Nursing courses must be completed seven years from the first term enrolled in the RN to BSN Program. NURS courses completed greater than seven years prior to graduation will need to be repeated to complete the degree requirements.

Individual Requirements and Support Systems for Students

The professional nurse performs many tasks as part of their practice. Training for this type of work requires the student to perform these same tasks and demonstrate certain characteristics. The following is a list of tasks/characteristics that may need to be performed/demonstrated as part of the training to become a professional nurse. This is not an all-inclusive list; it is a collection of examples of what might be encountered throughout the program.

- *Gross motor* - walking, stooping, bending, pulling, pushing (significant strength, endurance, and balance are required for many of these tasks)
- *Fine motor* - writing (English), pinching, injections, keyboarding
- Sensory/perceptual - hot/cold, sight (acuity, color), smell, hearing (high/low pitch/volume)
- *Emotional* – stability, sensitivity, caring.
- *Moral* - reliable, honest

Health Requirements

Following admission to the RN to BSN Program students are required to provide the following Health Documents while in the NURS 410 course (prior to the NURS 450 clinical course):

1. Provide a demonstration of personal health consistent with a safe nursing practice determined by a Department of Nursing *Health Information Form*.

2. Provide applicable immunizations or a declination waiver for any required immunizations that you opt out of, as/if applicable.
3. Follow the immunizations/clinical requirements required by the public/community health facility/agency. Depending upon the public/community health facility/agency experiential (clinical) experiences selected, students may need to complete additional health compliance requirements, including immunizations.
4. Students *may* be asked to provide TB testing documentation per the clinical facility/agency.
5. Required immunizations/titers that must be current include MMR (Measles, Mumps, Rubella).
6. Hepatitis B series is strongly encouraged and/or titer.
7. Students are encouraged to always keep original documents of the Health History Form and immunization documentation as federal law prohibits SMSU from providing a copy of the documents to a student or healthcare agency/facility.
8. Any significant change in health while actively taking nursing courses must be immediately communicated to the NURS 450 faculty member or faculty advisor. The faculty member or advisor will then work with the Director of Nursing to determine an appropriate course of action, such as clearance from a medical provider. If documentation of the Health Information form is needed at the clinical facility/agency site, it will be the student's role to share medical clearance with the course faculty, Director of Nursing, and the site.

Measles, Mumps, & Rubella (MMR) (*required*):

- Dates of **two** doses of MMR immunizations (which must be after 12 months of age); **OR**
- An antibody blood titer documenting immunity of measles, immunity of mumps, and immunity of rubella.
- If the document is a printed vaccination or titer record from a healthcare facility, then a signature is not required. However, if the vaccine or titer information is handwritten or is not a printed document from a healthcare facility, then it **MUST** be signed by a medical provider. Electronic signatures and stamps from the healthcare facility are also acceptable forms of signatures. State Immunization Registry reports are accepted.

Hepatitis B Immunization (*strongly encouraged*):

- Series of three doses of Hepatitis B Immunization. At minimum, this series must be started before acceptance into the Program **OR**
- An antibody blood titer documenting immunity of Hepatitis B.
- If the document is a printed vaccination or titer record from a healthcare facility, then a signature is not required. However, if the vaccine or titer information is handwritten or is not a printed document from a healthcare facility, then it **MUST** be signed by a medical provider. Electronic signatures and stamps from the healthcare facility are also acceptable forms of signatures. State Immunization Registry reports are accepted.

TB Testing (*students may be asked to provide documentation (per the clinical facility/agency requirements)*)

- a. A negative two step TB skin test (TST) consists of two separate negative tuberculin skin tests. The two-step TST involves placement of a purified protein derivative (PPD) to test for tuberculosis. The first reading must be read by a healthcare professional within 48 – 72 hours after placement, and the area of induration must be recorded. The second TST should be administered one to two weeks after the first test. TST must be done within the past 12 months.
- b. Submission of two previous negative TSTs within 13 months of each other, with the last TST in the past 12 months.
- c. One Interferon-Gamma Release Assay (IGRA) test, which includes QuantiFERON TB Gold (QFT-G), QuantiFERON Gold in tube test (GFT-GIT) or T-Spot for TB (T-Spot) along with any required follow-up, done within the past 12 months.
- d. Students who are positive reactors to a TST must have a report of one negative chest x-ray on file and the SMSU TST Reactor Form signed by a health care provider, assuring the absence of symptoms. Once a student has provided documentation of a negative chest x-ray taken after a positive TST, they will need not repeat it if they are symptom-free.
- e. Bacille Callmette-Gurerin (BCG) vaccinated individuals who test positive by TST and negative by IGRA are not required to have a follow-up x-ray.

Refusal to Obtain Immunizations or Titters

If the student is unable to comply with any or all requirements, or if the student has contraindication(s) to a required immunization, the student must:

1. Sign an Immunization Medical Exemption Acknowledgment form (from your clinical/provider) indicating the specific immunization(s) or titters or tests that are being voluntarily refused and the rationale for the refusal and/or secure a letter from their physician indicating the medical reason for not obtaining the required immunizations(s).
2. Students need to understand that SMSU will not be responsible for immunization medical exemptions or any related outcomes. SMSU will work with the student to secure alternative experiential (clinical) experiences. Experiential experiences may not be available to the student without proper immunizations and as a result the student may not be allowed to complete the required experiential experiences necessary to graduate.
3. Please be aware that some experiential learning (clinical) experiences/sites require additional immunizations, drug screens, background/criminal studies, and documentation to participate in the experiential experience. If a student cannot complete immunizations, this information must be communicated to their NURS 410/NURS 450 faculty member. The NURS 410/NURS 450 faculty member may communicate this to the experiential location before the student initiates hours.

Students are encouraged to maintain current health insurance as the student is responsible for any injuries they may incur while studying at SMSU or with a community agency. Southwest Minnesota State University and clinical agencies are not responsible for injuries incurred as part of any type of nursing-related learning experience. The student is responsible for meeting all their health care needs related to any issues or health concerns that arise.

NOTE: The preceding documentation is required by the Department of Nursing. Students will not be permitted to progress or continue in the NURS 450 capstone (clinical practica) course if the above health reports are not current and on file. If clinical time is missed due to missing health requirements, students' progression may be affected.

Professional Requirements

1. RN license - Students must maintain a current/active, unencumbered RN license, which will be verified prior to the NURS 450 course.
2. Background Study – the RN to BSN Program requires students to complete a Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) Background Study prior to the NURS 450 clinical course. *Students are responsible for the cost of the background study through DHS.* Minnesota law requires background studies on individuals who provide direct contact services to patients/clients in facilities and programs approved by MN DHS. Instructions on how to complete and pay for an MN DHS Background Study will be provided to students on the NURS 410 course. If a student has been convicted of certain crimes, they may not be allowed to work, or perform clinical activities, in certain facilities. Progression in the RN to BSN Program will not be guaranteed, as students convicted of these crimes may be unable to complete the clinical requirements of the RN to BSN Program. Any questions should be addressed to – the Minnesota Department of Human Services, Division of Licensing, Background Study Unit at 651-431-6620. Students are encouraged to always keep documentation of background studies as federal law prohibits SMSU from providing a copy of the documents to a student or healthcare facility. **Agencies may require an additional background study, such as a criminal study.**
3. HIPAA training– the Minnesota Department of Human Services Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) training will be completed by students prior to the NURS 450 course.
4. Liability Insurance - Student nurse liability insurance is provided by SMSU and only covers students practicing as nursing students at SMSU.

Providing Healthcare Services - It is unlawful for anyone who is not a licensed healthcare professional to provide healthcare to others. Nursing students may not provide nursing care to any person unless that activity/task was appropriately delegated to them by a designated licensed preceptor. For example, a nursing student may not

practice nursing procedures on others unless directed to do so by their designated licensed preceptor.

Substance Abuse or Impairment - Students may not participate in experiential learning activities or experiences, classroom, lab, etc. while under the influence of any substance that may impair judgment or result in disruptive or disorderly behavior. Any student using substances (including prescription medication) needs to communicate this to their course faculty member. Discovery of prior history of substance abuse or impairment requires that the student's background and situation be reviewed by the RN to BSN Program prior to acceptance or progression in the RN to BSN Program.

Resource Requirements

Books/Supplies

Students are responsible for obtaining their own textbooks and supplies. Instructors or faculty advisors can provide guidance regarding which Open Education Resources (OER's) or textbooks to use to create a cost-effective plan for the student.

Practicum (NURS 450):

Transportation

All students are responsible for meeting their own transportation needs for clinical learning experiences.

Uniform/Appearance

Students must maintain a neat, clean uniform in the style designated by the RN to BSN Program and clinical agencies and facilities. When students are in clinical settings, the uniform will be professional pants (black, brown, or khaki) with a plain white, brown, or black professional shirt, and an SMSU RN to BSN nursing student nametag (*students are responsible for the cost of the nametag through the NURS 410 course fee*) unless agencies/facilities mandate otherwise. When street clothes are allowed, the student must wear professional dress that is modest, neat, and clean. Students must meet the clinical agency and facility policy. The course instructor can remove any student from experiential experiences they feel are not professional in appearance and presentation.

The following considerations (and other considerations) may be prohibited at some experiential agencies, facilities, locations –

- Tobacco odor
- Body odor
- Dirty clothes
- Visible tattoos
- Earrings that are not a simple post
- More than one pair of earrings
- Any visible body piercing other than one eyebrow and two ears (tongue piercings are not permitted)
- Rings with stones that are not inlaid.

- Necklace that hangs down more than six inches from the neck when bent over.
- Hair that falls more than three inches in front of the face when bent over.
- Nails longer than the tip of the finger/thumb
- Artificial nails of any kind
- Perfume
- Open-toed shoes
- Blue jeans
- Shorts
- Mini skirts
- Halter tops, tank tops, low-cut blouses/shirts
- Abdomen exposed.
- Visible undergarments
- T-shirts with any writing (other than the SMSU logo)
- Anything indicated by the instructor or agency policy.

Student concerns following the above prohibitive list should contact the NURS 410/450 instructor.

Bloodborne Pathogens Policy:

Students are responsible for immediately reporting all sharps injuries and suspected exposures to bloodborne pathogens and/or other potentially infectious materials during their experiential experiences to their preceptor, and subsequently to their course instructor. The student will be assessed and treated following the experiential agency or facility policy. Health care costs for injuries or illnesses sustained or contracted during experiential learning experiences are not covered by SMSU or the facility or agency; such costs are the student's responsibility.

Chemical Use and/or Abuse Policy:

Students are expected to attend clinical learning experiences free from the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs. If a student is taking medically authorized drugs or other substances, during their experiential experience, that may alter clinical judgment or performance, it is the student's responsibility to notify the course instructor of this information prior to the experiential experience. If during any experiential experiences, reasonable suspicion arises surrounding a student's use or abuse of alcohol or illegal drugs, the RN to BSN student should be assessed and treated following the facility or agency policy. The agency or facility will contact the course instructor and inform them of the situation. If the assessment verifies alcohol or illegal drug use, the student will no longer be eligible to continue the experiential experience. Future course plan actions for the student will be determined by the RN to BSN Program and state regulations for reporting of chemical use and abuse for nursing practice will be followed. The cost of assessment and treatment for suspected alcohol or illegal drug use is not covered by the University or the agency/facility; such costs are the student's responsibility.

Writing Assignments

The most recent edition of the American Psychological Association (APA) *Publication Manual* will be used as the style guide for all written assignments in the RN to BSN Program.

Assignment Usage Disclaimer

All assignments and written work submitted by students are subject to being shared with others to meet accreditation and regulatory requirements. Course material may also be used anonymously for assessment of course student learning outcomes (CSLOs) and End of Program Student Learning Outcomes (EOPSLOs) addressed by the RN to BSN Program and assessment of the SMSU Liberal Education Program (LEP) SLOs. When student assignments are shared, the student's identity will be protected. Course artifacts may also be used for campus wide LEP or program assessment.

Attendance Policies

Attendance policies may vary between courses, experiential learning experiences, and instructors. The general attendance policy is as follows.

- Tardiness to experiential experiences may result in dismissal from the program.
- Unexcused absence from experiential experiences may result in dismissal from the program.

Photos, Audio, and Videos

Images and audio of clients may never be used by students without written permission from the client and the Department of Nursing Chair and RN to BSN Director.

Mobile/Cellular Communication Usage

Students should follow all agency/facility policies related to mobile communication device usage. Students may not use any portable electronic device in the presence of a patient/client.

If an emergency arises, the student should leave the learning area to take the call. This includes text messaging, email, and instant messaging.

Experiential (Clinical) Learning & Coursework

When a patient/client is receiving nursing-related care, they have a right to the same level of quality care regardless of student interaction. This includes anyone the student interacts with as an SMSU RN to BSN nursing student. Therefore, the student is responsible for being fully prepared for every experiential learning experience and interaction. The student also has the responsibility to communicate relevant information to the course instructor and nurse caring for the client. The client has the right to request that students not provide their care at any time without question.

A student that is determined to be unprepared for an experiential learning experience or who fails to communicate pertinent information that places the client's safety at risk will be designated as "unsatisfactory" for that day. If the student receives feedback that

results in two “unsatisfactory” days within an experiential experience, the student will be removed from the experience and will fail the course.

Students are fully responsible for understanding and abiding by all agency and facility policies, all SMSU policies, and all course-related policies. Not knowing about a policy is never an acceptable reason for lack of compliance and will result in removal from the experiential experience and failure of the course.

All course instructors, preceptors, and agency/facility staff have the right to remove any student from interactions with clients due to suspicion of the use of any substance (to include prescription medication) that may impair judgment or result in disruptive or disorderly behavior. Any such situation will be referred to the Department of Nursing Chair/RN to BSN Program Director for further review before the student may continue patient/client and experiential interactions.

Students participating in the NURS 450 course are encouraged to determine what steps are needed to ensure personal safety. This includes letting friends/faculty know when and where experiential activity will be taking place. Students are encouraged to contact new agencies and facilities well in advance to find approved parking. Students should never provide personal information to a client unless absolutely indicated by the experiential activities. It is the student’s responsibility to obey all agency policies regarding interactions with clients. Students may not be compensated for any experiential time in which they are earning academic credit without prior consent of the Department of Nursing Chair/Director of Nursing. For instance, a student may not ‘punch in’ while acting as a student nurse.

Experiential learning agencies, facilities, and SMSU are not responsible for injuries incurred as a part of any type of nursing-related learning experience. The student is responsible for meeting all their health care needs related to any issues or health concerns that arise. Should injury or exposure to a potential pathogen occur, the student is required to report the incident to their preceptor, instructor, and Department of Nursing Chair/Director of Nursing and follow the policy at the agency they are placed in.

Clinical Course Evaluation

- In NURS 450, the student’s experiential experience (clinical) will be evaluated on a pass/fail basis by the course faculty.
- The designated preceptor will provide feedback to the student/course faculty based on observations in the experiential setting and course outcome criteria.
- Final feedback will be provided using the Preceptor Feedback of Student Performance form.
- If the student does not pass the experiential learning experience portion of NURS 450, the student will receive an *F* in NURS 450.

Additional SMSU Resources Available to Nursing Students

SMSU Support Services

<https://www.smsu.edu/administration/academicdeans/resources.html>

<p>Deeann Griebel Student Success Center (DGSSC) https://www.smsu.edu/campuslife/dgssc/index.html</p>	<p>The DGSSC strives to equitably engage each student during their experience at SMSU. The department holistically supports students in achieving their academic, social, and professional success. Often serving as a liaison between students and support services on campus, the DGSSC is a one-stop-shop to assist both online and on-campus students with a variety of needs.</p> <p><u>Student Intervention Strategies</u> <u>Early Alert Procedures</u> with Faculty - Completed during week 3 and week 7 of each semester, faculty have the opportunity of reviewing course rosters and identifying students who may need additional support due to academic, attendance, financial, and/or personal reasons. The Early Alert Intervention Team, comprised of a variety of staff members across campus, reaches out to each student to address the early alert(s) and develop a plan for success. Academic advisors are also informed if any of their advisees have received early alerts.</p> <p><u>Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) Meetings</u> - After the conclusion of a semester, if a student is not meeting necessary academic thresholds for their GPA and completion rate, they may be placed on SAP. The DGSSC supports these students by having a staff member meet with identified students to discuss thresholds they will need to meet moving forward to go back to good academic standing, resources available on campus, and success strategies. A D2L course was also developed during the 2022-2023 academic year for students to complete and learn more about the SAP process.</p> <p><u>Tutoring Support</u></p>
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	<p>Tutor.com - A service provided by Minnesota State, Tutor.com offers 24/7 online, on-demand tutoring support in a variety of subject areas including student success topics such as note-taking, goal setting, and time-management support. SMSU students access Tutor.com through their D2L Brightspace and have access to 15 hours of free tutoring per academic year.</p> <p><u>Advising / Advising Services</u> DGSSC staff support faculty advisors at SMSU by providing training to new advisors and ongoing professional development for returning advisors.</p> <p><u>Exit Procedure</u> The DGSSC oversees SMSU's exit procedure for undergraduate students who are not planning to continue their education at SMSU. The procedure serves as a checklist to assist students with necessary steps to complete before leaving the University. Meetings with students are held in person, via phone, or virtually through Microsoft Teams. The most beneficial step of the exit procedure is the completion of the student perceptions survey to better understand why students leave SMSU.</p>
<p>Career Services https://www.smsu.edu/campuslife/careerservices/index.html</p>	<p>Provides comprehensive career resources to assist SMSU students and alumni with their career development and employment goals. The role of Career Services is not to act as a placement center. Career Services strives to equip students with resources to successfully manage their career development during their academic experience and beyond their graduation.</p>
<p>Mental Health Counseling Center https://www.smsu.edu/today/articles/2024/03-14-2024_mentalhealthcounselingcenter-newname.html</p>	<p>Staffed by mental health professionals who provide a variety of confidential, short-term counseling services, screenings, and testing services to enrolled students who reside in the State of Minnesota at the time of counseling.</p>

<p>Accessibility Services https://www.smsu.edu/accessibility/index.html</p>	<p>Provide support and accommodations to students with documented disabilities and serve as a resource for faculty, staff, and the university community to assure equal access to learning for all.</p>
<p>Financial Aid https://www.smsu.edu/campuslife/financialaid/index.html</p>	<p>Provides fair, equitable, and unbiased service to students seeking financial aid. Guarantees delivery of federal and state financial assistance to students within rules and regulations established by the respective departments of education. Coordinates all federal, state, and institutional financial assistance, including grants, scholarships, student employment, and student loans.</p>
<p>Student Health Services https://www.smsu.edu/campuslife/healthservices/index.html</p>	<p>Provides free and confidential services, including medical evaluations, for registered students. Assists students with off-campus referrals, as necessary.</p>
<p>Technology Resource Center (TRC) houses the Information Technology Services (ITS) https://www.smsu.edu/informationtechnology/services/index.html</p>	<p>Support is provided seven days a week during the academic year and in a more limited capacity during holidays, breaks, and the summer. TRC services include login assistance, password resets, mobile device support, D2L Brightspace support, email assistance, and support of on-campus Internet services including on-campus wireless access, computer kiosks, and computer labs. The TRC is one of several ways that ITS supports SMSU students, faculty, and staff.</p> <p>The TRC hours, when classes are in session, are: Monday – Thursday 7:30 am – 11:00 pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Friday: 7:30 am – 6:00 pm • Saturday 10:00 am – 5:00 pm

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sunday noon – 11:00 pm
<p>Writing Center https://www.smsu.edu/campuslife/writingcenter/index.html</p>	<p>It provides an opportunity for undergraduate and graduate students to improve their writing skills. The student writing consultants offer tutoring for students who wish to identify topics, organize ideas, or learn how to cite appropriately.</p>
<p>The Office of Online Learning and Transfer Partnerships https://www.smsu.edu/academics/onlinelearning/index.html</p>	<p>Provides student support to online learners through orientation, as a university liaison, and through advocacy. Online Learning developed and now monitors two D2L Brightspace orientations, one for undergraduates and one for graduates.</p>
<p>LGBTQ+ and Women's Center https://www.smsu.edu/campuslife/lgbtqcenter/index.html?gad_source=1&gclid=EAlaQobChMI1ZyH0bWzhQMVRhmtBh0jhgYoEAAAYASAAEgK8bvD_BwE</p>	<p>Offers workshops and presentations that increase visibility of women's, men's, and LGBTQ+ diverse identities, promote safe space and ally training, encourage anti-sexual violence awareness, and educate about other issues that affect these communities. The Center offers a library, provides workshops and presentations, and makes referrals to community agencies providing support.</p>
<p>Veterans Resource Center https://www.smsu.edu/campuslife/veterans/index.html?gad_source=1&gclid=EAlaQobChMIppy0wLWzhQMVmS-tBh02SAD5EAAAYASAAEgIQL_D_BwE</p>	<p>Serves the unique higher education needs of students who are Veterans, military members, or family members. It is a campus space where Veterans, military members and their families feel welcome. The Center facilitates communication between departments and staff who regularly interact with Veterans, and whose services Veterans depend upon.</p>
<p>The Office of Diversity and Inclusion https://www.smsu.edu/administration/diversityinclusion/index.html</p>	<p>Works with all SMSU constituents to help ensure a quality university education for all students - one that encourages a diverse and multicultural educational experience. A special emphasis will be</p>

	directed toward recruiting and retaining American students of color and international students.
Tutor.com https://www.smsu.edu/campuslife/dgssc/what-is-tutor.html	A service provided by Minnesota State, Tutor.com offers 24/7 access to free online tutoring accessible through D2L Brightspace and has access to 15 hours of free tutoring per academic year.
Mustang Market https://www.smsu.edu/campuslife/civicengagement/mustang-market.html?gad_source=1&gclid=EAlaIQobChMIk72pkKq1hQMV_xatBh1pAqIMEAAYASAAEgIEJvD_BwE	A food and resource pantry for students in need. The market is open once a month and/or by appointment. All items given to students are free of charge and meant to supplement limited resources.
Basic Needs Website/211 United Way Partnership https://www.smsu.edu/administration/deanofstudents/supporting-student-basic-needs.html	This website was developed to highlight basic needs resources at SMSU as well as Minnesota State's new partnership with United way. The United Way 211 resource hub is a statewide resource to connect students to support in their communities (regardless of where they are taking classes).

SMSU Administrative Policies

Governance

The RN to BSN Program will help identify nursing students as representatives for regularly scheduled RN to BSN program meetings. Students will volunteer, or be nominated, from 300 and 400-level nursing courses as available, to give a range of perspectives. Students may only be a representative once during their nursing coursework. Student representatives will communicate between students and the RN to BSN program. Communication may include the presentation of their/peer suggestions for program improvement related to, but not limited to, the plan of study, student handbook policies, and experiential learning/scheduling to the RN to BSN program, as well as communication of relevant RN to BSN program meeting discussions to the nursing student body. All nursing students will also participate in departmental governance through feedback on evaluations and surveys.

Communication

Communication will primarily happen via official SMSU email. For students to be successful when they are enrolled in a nursing course, it is important for students to frequently check their SMSU email accounts. Instructor email contact will be primarily

via SMSU email and not personal email accounts. Specific guidance about communicating with course instructors is provided in each nursing course.

Effective communication is a vital component of the student's overall professionalism. For effective communication, students must follow the appropriate channels. Non-experiential (clinical) courses would require the students to contact the course instructor for questions or concerns.

Formal Complaints

Students should not use student representatives to discuss course learning opportunities. Professional communication between students and instructors is needed to discuss course concerns.

Academic Appeals: If a student has grounds to appeal a grade, she/he should present his/her case to the faculty member who awarded the grade. If the meeting of the faculty member and the student fails to resolve the student's complaint, she/he may appeal to the Academic Appeal Committee. The complete Academic Appeals policy is available in the [SMSU Student Handbook](#).

Student Grievance/Complaints: A student has the right to seek a remedy for a dispute or disagreement, including issues of institutional or program quality such as an institution's compliance with the standards of an accrediting agency, or a claim of consumer fraud or deceptive trade practices, through a designated complaint or grievance procedure. This policy does not apply to academic grade disputes. Complete Student Grievance/Complaints policy is available in the SMSU Student Handbook.

Satisfactory Academic Progress

The intent of the SMSU Policy on Satisfactory Academic Progress is to make students aware when they are not making satisfactory academic progress. See [policy](#). The nursing student also needs to meet the RN to BSN Program Progression Policy. The student may be presented with a Striving for Success Plan after evaluation of the circumstances that lead to academic difficulty or low performance. The Striving for Success Plan may be presented to the student by the course instructor and shared with the Director of Nursing. This plan will include strategies that may help the student to improve academic performance and is created to guide the student to success.

The student is encouraged to take advantage of all the resources that exist for them at SMSU. Failure to meet the standards identified in the Striving for Success Plan may delay progression in the RN to BSN Program or dismissal from the RN to BSN Program. The Striving for Success Plan is not a part of the student's permanent academic record.

Handbook/Policy Revision

The RN to BSN nursing faculty will review the most current edition of the SMSU RN to BSN Nursing Student Handbook at least annually and are encouraged to provide feedback to the Department of Nursing Chair/Director of Nursing regarding the handbook. At the beginning of each fall semester, the most recent up-to-date version of

the handbook will be placed on the RN to BSN Nursing website and the D2L Brightspace RN to BSN Program Information Center course, with all students bound to the most current edition of the handbook. Updated versions of the handbook may be provided throughout the academic year.

All students will complete the Acknowledgement of Receipt of Handbook form upon entry into the RN to BSN Program.

National Student Nurses' Association Inc. Code of Academic and Clinical Conduct

Preamble

Students of nursing are responsible to society in learning the academic theory and clinical skills needed to provide nursing care. The clinical setting presents unique challenges and responsibilities while caring for human beings in a variety of health care environments.

The Code of Academic and Clinical Conduct is based on an understanding that to practice nursing as a student is an agreement to uphold the trust that society has placed in us. The statements of the Code provide guidance for the nursing student in the personal development of an ethical foundation and need not be limited strictly to the academic or clinical environment but can assist in the holistic development of the person.

A Code for Nursing Students

As students are involved in the clinical (experiential) and academic environments, we believe that ethical principles are a necessary guide to professional development. Therefore, within these environments we:

1. Advocate for the rights of all clients.
2. Maintain client confidentiality.
3. Take appropriate action to ensure the safety of clients, self, and others.
4. Provide care for the client in a timely, compassionate, and professional manner.
5. Communicate client care in a truthful, timely, and accurate manner.
6. Actively promote the highest level of moral and ethical principles and accept responsibility for our actions.
7. Promote excellence in nursing by encouraging lifelong learning and professional development.
8. Treat others with respect and promote an environment that respects human rights, values, and choice of cultural and spiritual beliefs.
9. Collaborate in every reasonable manner with the academic faculty and clinical staff to ensure the highest quality of client care.
10. Use every opportunity to improve faculty and clinical staff understanding of the learning needs of nursing students.
11. Encourage faculty, clinical staff, and peers to mentor nursing students.

12. Refrain from using any technique or procedure for which the student has not been adequately trained.
13. Refrain from any deliberate action or omission of care in the academic or clinical setting that creates unnecessary risk of injury to the client, self, or others.
14. Assist the staff nurse or preceptor in ensuring that there is full disclosure and that proper authorizations are obtained from clients regarding any form of treatment or research.
15. Abstain from the use of alcoholic beverages or any substances in the academic and clinical setting that impair judgment.
16. Strive to achieve and maintain an optimal level of personal health.
17. Support access to treatment and rehabilitation for students who are experiencing impairments related to substance abuse and mental or physical health issues.
18. Uphold school policies and regulations related to academic and clinical performance, reserving the right to challenge and critique rules and regulations as per school grievance policy.

(Adopted by NSNA Board of Directors, October 27, 2009, in Phoenix, AZ)

Academic Honesty

Southwest Minnesota State University Policy

I. Academic Honesty

- A. The aim of the academic honesty policy is to maintain the academic integrity of Southwest Minnesota State University and promote an intellectual climate of honesty and integrity. To maintain an environment of academic integrity all students are required to accept personal responsibility for their work at SMSU. Any offense against the academic honesty policy compromises the educational integrity of SMSU and will be considered a grave offense.
- B. Offenses against academic honesty are acts which unjustly advance one's academic standing at SMSU and include knowingly permitting or knowingly aiding a person in an offense against the academic policy.

II. Forms of Academic Dishonesty

In line with the National Association of Student Personnel Administrator (NASPA), SMSU's academic dishonesty will include the following forms:

- A. *Plagiarism*: Presenting someone else's work or ideas as your own. Plagiarism will include, but not be limited to:
 1. Submitting someone else's work or ideas as your own, including but not limited to homework assignments, term papers, research reports, lab reports, group projects, artistic works, tests, or class presentations.

2. Submitting someone else's electronic work as your own, including video clips, audio clips, electronic files, electronic programs, and any other copied electronic page, document, article, review, etc.
 3. Submitting someone else's work as your own with minor alterations. Paraphrasing without proper citation is also plagiarism.
 4. Submitting someone else's work without appropriate use of quotations, paraphrases, footnotes, or references.
- B. *Cheating*: Using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, or study guide.
Cheating will include, but not be limited to:
1. Copying from someone else during any type of examination.
 2. Communicating answers to an exam with other students and this includes allowing someone else to copy your own exam during a test.
 3. Using any material not permitted by the instructor for an examination.
 4. Requesting, acquiring, possessing, or providing someone else with an examination or portion of an examination without consent of the instructor.
- C. *Fabrication*: Falsifying any information. Fabrication will include, but not be limited to:
1. Submitting or presenting falsified research.
- D. *Tampering*: Tampering with the instructor's evaluation tools and/or documents.
Tampering will include, but not be limited to:
1. Changing, attempting to change, or falsifying academic records, including attendance records or sign-in sheets.
 2. Tampering with an examination, homework assignment, or project after it has been corrected.
- E. *Assisting in Dishonesty*: Aiding or attempting to aid someone else to commit an act of dishonesty. Assistance will include, but not be limited to:
1. Any student who aids another student in the performance of the above acts or has clear knowledge of another student's misconduct concerning academic honesty and does not bring it to the attention of the proper authorities (instructor, Director of Nursing, and the Department of Nursing Chair) will be held responsible for their non-action and subject to disciplinary measures for academic dishonesty.
- F. Any other forms of academic dishonesty as outlined in the instructor's syllabus.

III. Procedures for Reporting Incidents of Academic Dishonesty

A. Procedures

1. The faculty member will meet with the student regarding the specific charge, consider the evidence, and hear the student's explanation. If it is

not possible to meet with the student, the faculty member may proceed to number 2 below.

2. If the faculty member determines that the student has violated the Academic Honesty Policy, the faculty member informs the student in person or via U.S. Mail of the consequences of the violation and the grade-related sanctions the faculty member will impose. Faculty members must recommend any additional sanctions, (such as suspension, expulsion, etc.) to the appropriate Dean for action.
3. The faculty member completes an “Academic Dishonesty Incident Report Form” and forwards the completed form to the appropriate Dean. The form is found on the SMSU website at the Academic Deans’ Office webpage.
4. The Dean informs the student in writing that:
 - (a) This form has been filed with the Dean’s office.
 - (b) The Dean may impose sanctions in addition to those imposed by the faculty member in the event of subsequent, serious, or multiple violations; and
 - (c) The student has a right to appeal the sanction(s) given by the faculty member as described below.
5. The Dean keeps the complaint form, any supporting documentation, and records of the adjudication on file.

B. Sanctions

1. An incident of academic dishonesty that is determined to be minor in nature may result in one or more of the following sanctions: a warning; a verbal or written reprimand; or a reassessment of a resubmitted assignment with an appropriate reduction in points.
2. An incident of academic dishonesty that is determined to be major in nature may result in one or more of the following penalties: a failing grade for the assignment or test; a failing grade for the class; suspension from SMSU; expulsion from SMSU; or the revocation of a degree.
3. The punitive options available are not limited to the sanctions specified in the previous sections.

IV. Appeals

A student wishing to appeal the faculty member’s decision must submit a written appeal stating the grounds for such appeal within 5 class days of receipt of the written decision of the faculty member. This written appeal is to be routed through the appropriate Academic Dean’s office. The Dean will review the appeal, and decide if it meets the criteria for an appeal using the following guidelines:

Except as required to explain the basis of new information, an appeal shall be limited to a review for one or more of the following purposes:

1. To determine whether the decision was rendered fairly considering the charges and information presented, and in conformity with prescribed procedures giving

the complaining party a reasonable opportunity to prepare and to present information that the Academic Honesty Policy was violated and giving the accused student a reasonable opportunity to prepare and to present a response to those allegations. Deviations from designated procedures will not be a basis for sustaining an appeal unless significant prejudice results.

2. To determine whether the decision reached regarding the accused student was based on substantial information, that is, whether there were facts in the case that, if believed by the fact finder, were sufficient to establish that a violation of the policy occurred.
3. To determine whether the sanction(s) imposed were appropriate for the violation of the policy.
4. To consider new information, sufficient to alter a decision or other relevant facts not brought out in the original hearing, because such information and/or facts were not known to the person appealing at the time of the original Hearing.

If an appeal does not meet the criteria for appeal, the appeal may be rejected, and the student will be notified in writing.

If the appeal has merit, it is to be routed to the Academic Appeals Committee for a hearing. Procedures for the appeal hearing are found in SMSU Procedure G-005, Academic Appeals Committee.

All students will complete the Academic Honesty Statement form upon entrance into the RN to BSN Program.

SMSU Department of Nursing Plagiarism Policy

The SMSU Department of Nursing adheres to the [SMSU Academic Honesty Policy](#). When a lack of academic honesty is a concern, the course instructor(s) will alert the SMSU Department of Nursing Chair and the Director of Nursing who will then be in communication with the student.

Repercussions may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Failing grade on assignment (0 points)
 - The repercussions may include the student successfully completing the plagiarized assignment while adhering to academic honesty without a change in original grade. In cases with this requirement, failure to complete the assignment successfully will result in not passing the course.
- A failing grade in the nursing course
- Expulsion from the SMSU Nursing Program

The SMSU Department of Nursing does not allow nursing students to withdraw from a nursing course to avoid receiving an “F” grade due to academic honesty concerns.

Grading Policy

All grade point averages are managed by the registrar's office. Grade point averages are to be calculated to the second decimal and are truncated, not rounded. The following will not be calculated in determining the GPA: I, IP, AU, NA, W, CR, and NC. The actual GPA from the Registrar is used in guiding acceptance decisions in the RN to BSN Program.

The RN to BSN Program uses the following grading. All grading will be based on a percentage of the total points possible (points earned by the students, divided by total points possible). Nursing students must maintain an overall GPA of 2.0 and attain a minimum grade of 2.0 in all nursing courses required in the RN to BSN Program. Any nursing course (indicated by NURS) may be retaken once to attain a grade of 2.0. The student may not retake or withdraw from more than two nursing courses. The student may not progress in the RN to BSN Program if it becomes necessary for the student to retake or withdraw from more than two nursing courses.

Grading Table

A	90-100%
B	80-89.99%
C	70-79.99%
D	60-69.99%
F	Less than 60%

Grades

Students are required to score an average of 70% within a nursing course. If a student scores an average of less than 70% total in the nursing course, the student is required to repeat the course. Percentages will not be rounded up. The RN to BSN Program has a set 70% as a minimum benchmark for every nursing student to obtain as an average on their scores within a course. A score of <70% indicates a safety concern or lack of competency in patient care.

If a student feels that points or grades awarded are inappropriate, the student is encouraged to discuss concerns with the course instructor. The student is encouraged to present appropriate documentation and/or research to support their concerns. The student is required to always be professional in their communication with the course instructor and open to the rationales presented by the course instructor. Students can find the academic appeals process under Administrative Policies in the SMSU Student Handbook.

Graduation

Nursing Commencement Academic Honors

Purpose: To honor and recognize RN to BSN students near graduation or who have completed all BSN requirements at Commencement time.

Definitions:

Commencement time is in May every year, as stated on the SMSU University calendar.

Near graduation is defined as a student who has one more summer term and/or semester. A "near graduation" example is students graduating in December and selecting to walk at the May Commencement ceremony before their final fall semester near graduation.

Eligibility:

- ❖ All RN to BSN Students at the Commencement time or near graduation with a current SMSU nursing GPA of 3.6 or higher (Inclusive of courses taken at SMSU Nursing only).
- ❖ Be in the final semester or have one more summer term or semester in the RN to BSN program.
- ❖ Students must complete their Graduate Check by March 1 of the year of Commencement.

Unique Circumstance: Students who start the RN to BSN program in January and plan to graduate in July of the same year may be eligible for the Nursing Commencement Academic Honor. Students should contact their academic advisor and the RN to BSN program Director immediately to request assistance regarding the Nursing Commencement Academic Honor eligibility. Accelerated A-term grades and grade input from faculty may help to determine eligibility. Students should complete the Graduate Check in the first month of the program.

Nursing Pinning Policy for RN to BSN Program

Purpose: The nursing pin symbolizes welcoming and honoring nurses in the nursing discipline.

Eligibility: Upon completion of the RN to BSN Program, the student will be invited to the SMSU Nurse Pinning Ceremony. The Nurse Pinning Ceremony is held in May each year. Those students completing the RN to BSN Program in the summer or fall will be invited to the SMSU Nurse Pinning Ceremony the following spring.

Note: To verify the SMSU University policy on completing a degree in December and being eligible to attend May commencement, please refer to the SMSU Graduation Policy at <https://www.smsu.edu/campuslife/registrationrecords/graduation/policies.html>

Degree Check Process:

<https://www.smsu.edu/campuslife/registrationrecords/graduation/degree-check-process.html>

Students must complete their Degree Check by March 1st of the year of Commencement.

Pinning Ceremony: RN to BSN Students who meet the above eligibility criteria are invited to attend the pinning ceremony. It is vital that RN to BSN students RSVP if they will attend or not attend the pinning ceremony.