

School of Nursing

STUDENT HANDBOOK

RN to BSN



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The School of Nursing supports and complies with university policies. This handbook was developed to inform nursing students of LSUA School of Nursing (SON) policies. Students enrolled in the RN-BSN nursing program are expected to comply with all policies as outlined in the SON RN-BSN Student Handbook and University policies. The student handbook is intended to supplement the University catalog to provide guidelines for students as they progress through the nursing curriculum. The handbook is updated as necessary and updated on [the RN-BSN homepage](#).

### **Vision**

To be recognized as a leader in nursing education preparing professional nurses that have a positive impact on the health of their community.

### **Mission Statement**

The mission of the nursing education unit reflects the governing organization's core values and is congruent with its mission/goals. The governing organization and program have administrative capacity resulting in effective delivery of the nursing program and achievement of identified program outcomes.

### **Statement of Philosophy and Purpose**

The faculty of the School of Nursing has established the following mutually agreed upon statement of philosophy and purpose:

Nursing education is based on the acquisition and application of concepts from nursing, the humanities, and the biological, social, natural, and behavioral sciences. Learning is an interactive, goal-oriented process that guides a diverse population of students in the acquisition of knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to function in the health care setting and society

The person is a holistic being of uniqueness and innate worth. The person has rights, freedoms, and responsibilities and exists as an individual, families, or communities. The person has physical, developmental, emotional, psychosocial, cultural, spiritual, and functional needs that influence the human experience. The person is a dynamic being who interacts with, influences and is influenced by a constantly changing environment.

Environment is the set of conditions, circumstances and factors, both internal and external, that surround, interact with and influence the person. The environment, which is fluid and ever changing, is in constant dynamic exchange with the person.

Health is a human experience involving the wholeness of the person. It is a state of optimal functioning and exists on a continuum of wellness and illness.

As an art and a science, nursing is a profession that responds to the holistic needs of individuals, families, and communities. Nursing is committed to the care of persons on all points on the health continuum. Nursing is a partnership with the person involving promotive, restorative, and

supportive roles and practice. Nursing care is accomplished through application of the nursing process and incorporation of professional standards. (ANA Standards, NLN, QSEN).

### **Program Description**

#### **RN to BSN Program**

This program is designed to provide qualified registered nurses educational opportunities to broaden their career pathway. This degree also prepares students for graduate-level study.

Designed for the non-traditional working RN, the RN to BSN Program offers 100% online courses in seven weeks. Learning experiences in practicum courses are designed to facilitate achievement of course objectives and complement the student's career and academic goals.

#### **Accreditation**

All programs offered by the SON at LSUA are approved by the Louisiana State Board of Nursing (LSBN) 17373 Perkins Rd., Baton Rouge, LA 70810, telephone 225-755-7500 fax 225-755-7564 [www.lsbns.state.la.us](http://www.lsbns.state.la.us) and accredited by the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing, Inc. (ACEN) at the following address: 3390 Peachtree Road, Suite 1400, Atlanta, Georgia 30326, Phone:404-975-5000, [www.acenursing.org](http://www.acenursing.org)

### **Student Learning Outcomes**

#### **RN to BSN Program**

Students graduating from the RN to BSN Program will:

1. Integrate nursing leadership theories in professional practice.
2. Utilize principles of communication effectively in professional nursing practice.
3. Apply and share research findings after critical analysis to promote evidence based nursing practice.
4. Integrate professional standards in nursing practice to ensure delivery of safe, quality, patient centered care.
5. Demonstrate professional nursing practice through collaboration and advocacy.
6. Utilize concepts of information systems to support nursing practice.

## **Academic and Professional Standards**

### **RN BSN Program Admission Criteria**

The RN returning to the University for their RN to BSN Degree must meet all the following requirements to be admitted into the program:

1. Hold an associate degree in nursing from an accredited nursing program.
2. Provide verification of an unencumbered RN license in the United States.
3. Be unconditionally admitted to the University and have declared RN to BSN as a major (see catalog for admission procedures).
4. Have at least a grade of “C” in each of the general education courses required by the Bachelor of Science in Nursing.
5. Have an overall GPA of 2.25 or higher.
6. Submit all official transcripts from other Universities.

Transfer students requesting permission to receive credit for 3000 and 4000-level nursing courses must have successfully completed equivalent nursing courses from other universities within the previous five years.

Students previously enrolled in the RN-BSN program at LSUA applying for readmission will be required to repeat BSN core courses that were completed more than 5 years ago.

After admission to the University, an individualized program of study will be written by a nursing advisor.

### **Degree Requirements**

1. Student must complete all the requirements pertaining to baccalaureate degrees as prescribed in the Louisiana State University Catalog under degree requirements.
2. Students must complete 30 hours of 3000/4000-level nursing courses.
3. Students are required to make a grade of “C” or higher in all non-nursing and nursing courses applied to the BSN curriculum.
4. Students must complete the degree within 5 years of taking the first BSN course.

## Core Performance Standards for Admission and Progression

It is the policy of LSUA School of Nursing not to discriminate and to render all services without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, age, sex, veteran status, political affiliation, disabilities, or in accordance with EWE 92-7 because of an individual's sexual orientation. Thus, in compliance with the American with Disabilities Act of 1990, all individuals regardless of disability are afforded equal opportunity for admission and to achieve the same results for progression as specified in course objectives as those afforded others. For individuals with disabilities, reasonable and acceptable modifications to all parties are made to policies, practices, or procedures, when such modifications are necessary to measure achievement of course objectives, unless doing so would fundamentally alter course objectives and/or client safety. Modifications are offered at no additional charge. The student reserves the right to refuse these accommodations. Students with documented disabilities who have requested modifications to policies, practices, or procedures in the School of Nursing may file a grievance if they believe that they did not receive appropriate accommodations or services, or if they believe they have been treated in a discriminatory manner, in accordance with LSUA Policy Statement 207.

## Retention and Progression

To satisfactorily progress in all nursing programs a student must:

1. Maintain an overall grade point average of 2.0 or higher.
2. Achieve a grade of “C” or higher in the theory component of each required nursing course. The following grading scale is used by the School of Nursing:

100 – 93	(A)
92 – 85	(B)
84 – 77	(C)
76 – 65	(D)
64 – 0	(F)
3. Course Failures: RN-BSN students must maintain a 2.0 GPA at the conclusion of every semester. The first semester the RN-BSN student falls below a 2.0 GPA, the student must sit out a seven-week session. During the seven weeks, the student will meet with their advisor or the RN-BSN Program Director to develop a curriculum plan; ensuring student needs are met for successful completion of the program. The second semester the RN-BSN student falls below a 2.0 GPA, they will be dismissed from the program. The student can re-apply for the program 12 months after dismissal.
4. Withdrawals: Students withdrawing from two courses in one session, will be allowed to continue in the program. If said student, withdraws from courses in two consecutive sessions, they will be required to withdraw from the program for one academic year. At the conclusion of that year, students will continue to resume coursework in the RN-BSN program with an updated curriculum plan.
5. Progression in the nursing program reflects the student’s commitment to the profession of nursing and demonstrates professional responsibility. You are responsible for understanding these policies as they pertain to your success in the program. Students are

permitted to repeat only two nursing courses. Students are permitted to enroll in any nursing course no more than two times.

## **Probation/Suspension/Dismissal**

### ***Probation***

A student may be placed on probation and is subject to dismissal when failing to comply with certain standards. Probation in the School of Nursing serves as notice to the student that a violation of standards has been committed when:

### ***Professional Probation***

Lack of professional compatibility is demonstrated. Such status is a warning that an additional violation will result in immediate dismissal from the School of Nursing. Professional compatibility is demonstrated by consistently meeting standards described in the Louisiana Nursing Practice Act, the American Nurses Association Code of Ethics, LSUA's Student Code of Conduct, and LSUA's Department of Nursing's Policies. The Louisiana Nurse Practice Act is available in the James C. Bolton Library or from the Louisiana State Board of Nursing.

### ***Suspension***

A student who is arrested, charged with, convicted of, pled guilty or no contest to, or sentenced for any criminal offense in any state or foreign country will be immediately suspended from any nursing courses. Suspension will remain in effect until a decision is made by the appropriate State Board of Nursing.

### ***Dismissal***

A student found guilty of any of the following will be dismissed from the School of Nursing and subject to university disciplinary procedures:

- Academic cheating
- Plagiarism
- Unauthorized possession of examinations
- Falsification of patient and/or agency records
- Falsification of any LSUA documents
- Illegal possession, sale, use, or distribution of drugs
- Illegal possession of weapons
- Theft
- Violation of Patient Confidentiality (HIPAA)
- Positive Drug Screen
- Any other activity incompatible with professional behaviors delineated in the Nurse Practice Act.

## **Appeal Process**

To make an appeal, the student should write a formal letter addressed to the RN-BSN Program Director.

The letter should be emailed to Dr. Catherine Doyle, [cdoyle@lsua.edu](mailto:cdoyle@lsua.edu).

The subject of the email should contain the student's last name followed by appeal letter. In the letter, students should include contact information for follow-up, extenuating circumstances leading to the request for appeal, and plans for success in future courses. Official documentation supporting the stated extenuating circumstances (i.e., death certificates, letters from doctors or attorneys, records from hospitals, etc.) needs to be mailed directly from the official agency to the School of Nursing. Scanned, emailed, or hand-carried documents will not be accepted. Students should also submit a current unofficial transcript, if possible. A student appeal will only be entertained by the appropriate committee one time on the same issue. The Nursing faculty's final decision on the appeal will stand.

## **State Board of Nursing Criteria**

RN-BSN students must maintain an unencumbered Registered Nursing license during all aspects of program enrollment.

After verification of an unencumbered RN license from an accredited program upon enrollment in the RN to BSN Program, any subsequent disciplinary action by the appropriate State Board of Nursing shall be reported immediately to the Chair of the School of Nursing. Failure to report any and all subsequent disciplinary actions, arrests, or impairments may result in dismissal from the program.

## **Evaluation of Teaching Effectiveness**

Students complete structured evaluation of the faculty, the course, and clinical facilities upon completion of each individual nursing course. These tools may demonstrate strength and/or improvement opportunities in the course content, instructional materials, textbooks, faculty presentation, and clinical facilities. For these reasons, care and attention should be given to objectively evaluate each course, faculty member, and clinical facility.

## **Attendance Policy**

The School of Nursing adheres to the University's Attendance Policy (PS 206). To derive optimum benefits from a course, the student must log into and participate in courses weekly. Not participating in weekly coursework will be considered an absence from the course. Absence from class for any reason will result in a loss for the student. When excessive, the student is at risk of failing or being dropped from the course. Participation in online learning activities as outlined on the course schedule is documentation of attendance in the virtual classroom. Please refer to additional information related to attendance policies in **Policy Statement 206 Student Class Attendance Policy**.



Once a course begins, it is essential to log in within 24 hours in order to prevent being administratively dropped from the course.

### **Late Assignments**

- Discussion forums and quizzes must be completed by due date. Late submission will not be accepted.
- Written assignments will be accepted up to three days after the original due date. Late assignments submitted within the first three days will receive a 10 %-point deduction. After 3 days, no assignments will be accepted without prior approval of the course instructor and a grade of zero will be entered into the gradebook.

### ***Response time and feedback on assignments***

Timely response and feedback to students is essential for clear communication. Emails will be answered within 24 hours on weekdays and 48 hours on weekends of receipt and is the most efficient means of communicating in this course.

Written assignments will be graded within 96 hours (4 days) of the due date. Feedback comments and grade will be submitted to Moodle for review. Discussion boards will be monitored for original postings and responses. Comments will be offered on each discussion board. Grades will be posted within a week of the discussion board closing. If it is necessary to alter response times articulated above, this will be clearly communicated to students in a timely fashion.

### **Computer Competency**

Students should have access to a computer with Internet access and demonstrate basic computer skills including producing word documents, saving multiple file formats; send email with attachments; manage pop-up blockers and manage the LSUA email account. Students should also be able to navigate Moodle, access course documents posted on Moodle, participate in discussion board, and complete posted assignments including online testing.

### **Plagiarism Policy**

Plagiarism (quoting or paraphrasing someone else's words and claiming them as your own) is academic dishonesty and is a serious offense for which you can receive an "F" for a class. Most plagiarism is accidental, so to help you avoid plagiarism please read **LSUA Policy Statement 228 Code of Student Conduct**.

### **BSN Artificial Intelligence Statement**

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is a tool that is available to the public; however, it should not be used to produce personal academic written work. The use of AI to develop and complete written assignments is a form of plagiarism and breach of academic integrity. If AI is suspected in submitted student work, the LSUA School of Nursing Professional Probation Policy and the **LSUA Policy Statement 228 Code of Student Conduct** will be enforced.

## ***Communication***

### **Communication with Faculty**

Faculty contact information is listed in course syllabi. University policy requires that you use your lsua.edu email address in all academic communication. Faculty may also communicate through phone calls, or video message in order to assist students.

### **Course Announcements**

Course announcements, class communications, and important course information will be posted in the "News and Announcements" section of the Moodle course page. Please note that all announcements posted here are considered official, and students are expected to be responsible for the information provided.

### **Email Address**

All students are required to use their email address provided by LSUA. Frequent memos, information updates, etc. may be sent via email; therefore, students are required to check for email messages from the instructor several times each week.

### **Chain of Command**

If questions, concerns, or objections arise please follow the course chain of command when contacting faculty. If this structure is not followed, addressing your concern may be delayed until the process is appropriate.

Individual course instructor → Course Coordinator → RN/BSN Program Director

## **Campus Resources**

### **Disability Services**

LSUA is committed to providing appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities. This office serves as a liaison between students and instructors. You can reach the Office of Disability Services at (318)-427-0137.

### **Library**

Hours of operation are posted online. The library not only provides you with books, journals, newspapers, on-line databases, reference librarians, etc., it can also serve as a quiet place in which to get some productive writing done. Wireless laptops are available for checkout at the circulation desk for use in the library and include Microsoft Office applications. You can also access the library's online databases from home through the LSUA Library homepage. You can contact the library at (318)-473-6441.

### **The Writing Center**

Located in Bolton Library. Provides trained upper-level student tutors to help you at any stage in your writing process but will not write or edit for you. Papers can be submitted electronically for review, but it is the student's responsibility to provide adequate time for feedback prior to the due date established for the assignment.

### **Informational and Educational Technology (IET) Services**

The IET staff can assist you with your technology questions and needs while you are attending LSUA, and you may find them essential when taking online courses. You can access information on using Moodle and Microsoft Office applications at IET Service homepage. You can also obtain help with technical problems and find training seminars available for your professional development. You can contact IET Services at 318- 473-6421.

### ***Technical skills required to successfully meet course objectives***

- For this course, students must have a working knowledge of the Microsoft 365 (Word, PowerPoint, and Excel).
- Students must be knowledgeable about using the internet for research purposes.
- Students must have the ability to navigate the learning management system, Moodle.

### ***Technology (software & hardware) required to meet course objectives***

- PC or Mac computer

### ***Browser***

Google Chrome, Mozilla Firefox (Note: LSUA's recommended browser is Google Chrome – this has proven to be the only browser that doesn't create connectivity Research while using Moodle. If a student chooses to use the browser of their choice, they risk their assignment and/or assessment not submitting properly.)

### ***Internet Connection***

Students will need an internet connection (preferably broadband) to participate in the course assignments, discussions, and assessments.

### ***Microsoft Office 365***

Students will use Microsoft Office for viewing and submission of assignments. Students will also be required to edit/attach/upload assignments for submission

- **Word** – word processing software
- **Excel** – spreadsheet software
- **PowerPoint** – presentation software

### **ID/Security Policy**

Students must log in with their LSUA username and password to access course materials, assignments, and assessments.

**Student Records:** Student Records are safeguarded, and confidentiality maintained. The School of Nursing and LSUA are consistent with the regulation of the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 and ensures student access to records and prohibits release of information without student's permission refer to [Policy Statement 217 Privacy Rights of Students](#).

### **Online Orientation**

Following admission to the RN-BSN program it is strongly recommended that students participate in orientation to online programs. [The Orientation to Online Learning](#) page has information that can aide in the transition to online learning.

### **Advising**

RN-BSN students will receive an individualized curriculum plan upon admission from their advisor. It is important to follow this plan closely to ensure timely graduation. Any deviations from the original plan will result in delayed graduation. It is the responsibility of the student to be certain that all courses outlined on the curriculum plan provided on admission are completed. Failure to follow the degree plan will jeopardize program completion and delay graduation.

### **Academic Assistants**

Some courses may include Academic Assistants. Academic Assistants are part-time, contract employees utilized to enhance the student experience. They work closely with and under the direction of the faculty member teaching the course and function as an extension of the course professor. Course faculty are the primary point of contact for course related issues.

### **Nursing 4052 Scholarly Project Guidelines**

Students who are enrolled in NURS 4052 will be required to select a project mentor based on the requirements listed in the RN to BSN Project Mentor Handbook. Students will be required to complete **90 hours** related to their scholarly project. The project mentor should be utilized as a

resource towards project completion. Completion of scholarly project hours is a major part of the nursing curriculum and participation is mandatory.

Students are responsible for logging and completing scholarly project hours as identified in the course syllabus. The student may be dropped from the course or earn a grade of “NC” or “F” if the number of required hours is not met.

The student is responsible for adhering to the policies, procedures, and regulation of the state board of nursing in their licensed state, as well as those of any healthcare institution associated with their scholarly project.

### **Student Representation on School of Nursing Faculty Committees**

Student participation and input into matters relevant to the School of Nursing is encouraged and can be achieved by students participating in virtual meetings each semester. Connection information is sent out through course faculty for students to participate. Students are encouraged to participate in this opportunity.

## **STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES**

Student Support Services at LSUA focuses on enhancing student development. It offers comprehensive counseling services which are important to a student’s success while attending LSUA, and thereafter, throughout lifetime. Some of the services include:

Career/personal counseling services	Resume/interview assistance
Career assessment and planning	Personal growth assistance
Career workshops	Crisis intervention
Time management assistance	Support groups
Study Skills training/workshops	The Writing Center
Online Tutoring	

For financial aid information and nursing scholarship contact the Office of Scholarship and Financial Aid. <http://sfa.lsua.edu/>

Students in violation of standards stated in this handbook may be placed on academic/professional probation and will be dismissed from the nursing program. See Probation, Suspension, and Dismissal Policies

## SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY (Approved and adopted 2/29/2012, Revised November 2014)

In addition to reflecting the beliefs of the University, the School of Nursing at LSUA supports the American Nurses Association beliefs of using social media. *Social networking and the Internet provide unparalleled opportunities for rapid knowledge exchange and dissemination among many people, but this exchange does not come without risk. Nurses and nursing students have an obligation to understand the nature, benefits, and consequences of participating in social networking of all types. Online content and behavior have the potential to enhance or undermine not only the individual nurse's career, but also the nursing profession. (American Nurses Association, September 2011).*

The School of Nursing has adopted the following principles and tips to prevent problems of social networking as stated by ANA and applies to all *nursing faculty, staff, and students*.  
ANA's Principles for Social Networking

1. Nurses must not transmit or place online individually identifiable patient information.
2. Nurses must observe ethically prescribed professional patient-nurse boundaries.
3. Nurses should understand that patients, colleagues, institutions, and employers may view postings.
4. Nurses should take advantage of privacy settings and seek to separate personal and professional information online.
5. Do not take photos or videos of patients on personal devices, including cell phones.
6. Promptly report a breach of confidentiality or privacy.

### Six Tips to Prevent Problems

1. Remember that standards of professionalism are the same online as in any other circumstance.
2. Do not share or post information or photos gained through the nurse-patient relationship.
3. Maintain professional boundaries in the use of electronic media. Online contact with patients blurs this boundary.
4. Do not make disparaging remarks about patients, employers, co-workers, faculty/staff, or other students even if they are not identified.
5. Do not take photos or videos of patients on personal devices, including cell phones.
6. Promptly report a breach of confidentiality or privacy.

Nursing students may not post any material that could potentially violate patient confidentiality on social media sites. Students may be subject to disciplinary action by the school and the clinical agency for comments that are either unprofessional or violate patient privacy. HIPAA regulations apply to comments made on social networking sites, and violators are subject to the same prosecutions as with other HIPAA violations.

In the event of a suspected or actual breach in the Social Media Policy, the "chain of command" will be followed in reporting the 'event'. Chain of command includes the appropriate course/clinical faculty member and/or Chairperson of the School of Nursing. In the event of a

report, the individual reporting ‘event’ would be assured of anonymity. Any identified breach will result in disciplinary action up to dismissal from the nursing program.

## Chain of Command Statement (Developed and Approved October 2015)

### I. Purpose/Expected Outcome:

The purpose of the chain of command policy is to provide a process to address concerns, disputes, questions, and issues that arise with faculty, staff, and students, or anyone who has been unable to obtain an acceptable response about a reportable issue or conflict from their direct line of management or instructor. Members of the nursing department faculty and staff are obligated to work together to resolve identified problems in a timely manner, however if a resolution cannot be made then successively higher levels of command should be notified until a resolution is achieved.

The Louisiana State University at Alexandria School of Nursing utilizes the traditional stepwise approach to reporting any concerns, disputes, questions, and/or issues concerning faculty, staff, and students. Any dispute will begin with the instructor, either in theory or clinical, and if not resolved at that level progress to the course coordinator, student advisor, and lastly the department chair. If not resolved at this level the person/persons can then proceed on to the Provost and Vice Chancellor of Academic and Student affairs. At all levels the chain of command, discussion, collaboration, and mutual problem solving is encouraged. Resolution of a conflict at the point of first level is preferred.

### II. Definitions:

1. Chain of Command (COC): - Authoritative structure established to resolve administrative, clinical, student, or other conflicts, disputes or issues of concern in a stepwise fashion through the lines of authority until a resolution is reached.
2. Hierarchical Level - Provides a mechanism for reporting and /or resolving concerns through the levels of lowest to highest. The methodical flow of information for decision making, power and authority, assumes that each level is subordinate to the level to which it reports.
3. Boundaries – The COC places responsibility on everyone to know their place in the chain and to stay within those limits.
4. Positions – Instructor (either theory/clinical), course coordinator, student advisor, Department Director, Provost and Vice Chancellor of Academic and Student affairs.

### III. Policy:

- A. The COC for resolutions of conflicts, disputes, reporting unacceptable behaviors, communication issues, discredit of competency, disregarding of rules, and refusing to resolve issues of concern must start with the direct supervisor, manager, or instructor.
- B. If the issues are not resolved on the primary level, then next lineage on the COC is to be notified for resolution.
- C. The COC will be as follows once an incident arises:
  - D. 1. Course Instructor
  - E. 2. Course Coordinator



- F. 3. Student Advisor
- G. 4. Department Chair
- H. 5. Provost and Vice Chancellor of Student and Academic Affairs
- I. 6. Chancellor

IV. Procedures/Interventions

1. Faculty, staff, or student should begin reporting of concerns, questions, disputes, or issues within the lowest level of the COC. The person should contact the appropriate level of authority first starting with their direct lineage and allow a reasonable amount of time for a response. A second attempt should be made before the escalation to the next level of authority begins.
2. If unable to get an acceptable response or resolution to the conflict or question of concern the faculty, staff, or student should contact the program director, the next higher level in the COC.
3. If unable to reach a resolution at the above level and the conflict and question of concern cannot be met, then the issue should then be addressed by the DON.
4. If resolution is still not reached, then the Provost and Vice Chancellor of Academic and Student Affairs should be contacted of the unresolved issue.

## References

American Nurses Association. (2011, September). *Principles for social networking and the nurse*.

National Council of State Boards of Nursing. (2011, August). *White paper: A nurse's guide to the use of social media*. <http://www.hhs.gov/>