

# HANDBOOK FOR MSN GRADUATE STUDENTS



Academic Year 2023-2024

Rhode Island College

Zvart Onanian School of Nursing

Rhode Island Nursing Education Center (RINEC)

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Zvart Onanian School of Nursing

Welcome, to the Rhode Island College Onanian School of Nursing! We are excited to have you join us on this fulfilling journey toward one of the most rewarding careers. Nurses make a significant impact on health outcomes and shape the future of nursing whether through practice at the bedside or in the community, across every level. Whether you are just beginning your nursing journey or advancing your career with a graduate certificate or degree, each step you take enhances your knowledge, competence and ability to positively impact the lives of those under your care.

**EDUCATE. INNOVATE. LEAD.**

**EDUCATE.** Teaching and learning are at the heart of our mission. Our dedicated faculty provide an exceptional learning experience through innovative teaching and learning strategies, simulation, and comprehensive clinical experiences. We believe that education is the foundation upon which you will build a successful and fulfilling future.

You will have access to state-of-the-art facilities, and resources. We partner with all major healthcare organizations in the state offering the best clinical experiences possible. These placements will allow you to apply classroom knowledge in real-world settings, preparing you for the challenges and rewards of patient care.

**INNOVATE.** Innovation is a driving force in the field of healthcare, and we encourage you to embrace this mindset. As nursing students, you will be at the forefront of groundbreaking advancements in nursing and healthcare. Throughout the program, you will explore innovative approaches to patient care, technology integration, and evidence-based practices. You will learn to think creatively, challenge the status quo, and contribute to the ever-evolving landscape of nursing.

**LEAD.** Leadership is a quality we cultivate in our nursing students. Nurses play a crucial role in providing direct patient care and leading change within the healthcare system. Develop your leadership skills, whether it be at the bedside, at the system level, or in policy development. We will support you to become confident and compassionate leaders advocating for the well-being of patients and communities.

Throughout your time at Rhode Island College, we will support you every step of the way. Our faculty and staff are here to guide you, and help you realize your full potential. Engage in extracurricular activities and connect with your fellow nursing students to enhance your educational experience and create lasting friendships.

Nursing is a profession that requires compassion, critical thinking, and a commitment to lifelong learning. Your impact on individuals and communities is profound. Your dedication to quality healthcare will shape the future of nursing and touch countless lives. We are immensely proud of each and every one of you for choosing this noble path and dedicating yourselves to the service of others. Your commitment, resilience, and passion exemplify the core values of nursing, we are confident you will continue to shine in your future endeavors.

Once again, welcome to the Rhode Island College Onanian School of Nursing! We are excited to witness your growth, learning, and positive impact in nursing. Congratulations on taking this important step in your career!

Warm Regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Justin DiLibero".

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## GRADUATE NURSING PROGRAM

### Introduction

The Department of Nursing was established in 1970 and reorganized as a School of Nursing in 2006. In 2007, the Master of Science in nursing program was established and admitted its first class. In 2016, the Doctor of Nursing Practice program was established and admitted its first class. The Nursing Programs at Rhode Island College are highly respected in the State of Rhode Island with the majority of nursing alumni living and working in Rhode Island while serving the health care needs of residents of Rhode Island and beyond.

### Accreditation

Rhode Island College is accredited by the New England Commission of Higher Education (NECHE). The baccalaureate degree program in nursing, master's degree program in nursing and Doctor of Nursing Practice program at Rhode Island College are accredited by the [Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education](#). The baccalaureate program in Nursing is approved by the Rhode Island State Board of Nursing Registration and Nursing education. The nurse anesthesia program is accredited by the [Council on Accreditation](#).

### Vision, Mission & Values Statement

#### Vision:

The Zvart Onanian School of Nursing develops exceptional and diverse professional nurses with the competencies to optimize health and well-being of individuals, families, communities, and populations through advocacy, innovative disruption, and transformation.

#### Mission:

The Zvart Onanian School of Nursing creates a collaborative environment for teaching and learning where a diverse community of students becomes empowered as leaders who enrich the health and well-being of individuals, families, communities, and populations across Rhode Island as well as regionally, nationally, and globally.

#### Values:

Resilience – We nurture and support individuals to successfully adapt to change and challenging experiences through self-care, self-efficacy, and self-advocacy.

Inclusivity – We embrace all individuals and promote an accepting, positive, collaborative and respectful culture that is equitable, diverse and socially just.

Innovation – We strive to incorporate new ideas, processes, and approaches to education and practice within evolving healthcare systems.

Caring – We provide a compassionate, empathetic, respectful environment for individuals to work, grow, develop, and learn in a culture of kindness.

Success – We provide support and opportunities for individuals to achieve academic excellence and foster personal, professional, and leadership development.

## **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Statement**

The Zvart Onanian School of Nursing recognizes diversity, equity, and inclusion as critical to nursing education, professional nursing practice, and the health of populations and communities. We are committed to a learning environment that embraces civility and respect, and values the sharing of differences among all students, faculty, and staff. We seek to prepare nurses who can spur system-level transformation, including addressing structural racism and systemic inequity, to promote improved health outcomes for all people.

(Revised 8/2023)



## THE MASTER OF SCIENCE IN NURSING PROGRAM

### Study Options

Nursing education at the Master's level offers opportunities to specialize in Adult/Gerontology Acute Care and Population/Public Health Nursing. Within the Adult/Gerontology Acute Care option, nurses may choose to prepare for either the Adult/Gerontology Acute Care Clinical Nurse Specialist (AGACCNS) or the Adult/Gerontology Acute Care Nurse Practitioner (AGACNP) role. There are also four Certificate programs: Nursing Care Management, Healthcare Quality and Patient Safety, Post-MSN Adult Gerontology Acute Care CNS, and Post-MSN Adult Gerontology Acute Care NP.

All study options include a strong clinical focus. The ultimate aim of the program is to improve health and health care outcomes by preparing expert nurses for advanced practice roles. The graduate student is an active agent in the educational process, assuming the major responsibility for learning. The educator is a facilitator who fosters professional growth and educational mobility through recognition of individual difference, creative potential, and learning styles. Together, student and educator engage in the cooperative enterprise of education.

### Curriculum Frameworks

The AACN Synergy Model for Patient Care (2003) guides the Adult/Gerontology Acute Care option. The focus of the specialty courses: NURS 530 (Adult/Older Adult Health/Illness I for CNS), NURS 540 (Adult/Older Adult Health/Illness I for NP), NURS 610 (Adult Health/Illness II for CNS), NURS 615 (Adult Health/Illness II for NPs), NURS 620 (Adult Health/Illness III for CNS), and NURS 625 (Adult Health/Illness III for NPs) reflect the spheres of influence (e.g., patient/family; nursing/nursing practice; and systems). The Synergy Model identifies patient needs that are matched with nurse characteristics in the provision of optimal care.

The Population/Public Health Nursing option prepares nurses to provide advanced level population-focused services that improve population health outcomes. The public health core functions of assessment, policy development, and assurance frame public health nursing practice. Ecological theory underpins the view of health and public health nursing and is used to promote the health of populations. The theory provides the framework from which community and public health nurses study the relationships between individual and aggregate health and the multiple determinants of their health (environmental, social, biological, and behavioral) that interact to affect health at the individual, family, community, organizational, and societal levels.

### Curriculum

The curriculum of the MSN program is based on the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) Essentials: Core Competencies for Professional Nursing Education (2021). The Essentials are reflected in the program goals and learning outcomes.

## MSN Program Outcomes

Students of the MSN Program will demonstrate mastery of all of the Essentials of Master's Education in Nursing (AACN, 2011) and the AACN Essentials: Core Competencies for Professional Nursing Education (2021) Competencies and level-2 Sub-competencies within the Ten Domains for Nursing, leading to achievement of the following MSN End-of-Program Outcomes:

1. Demonstrate the integration, translation, synthesis, and application of established and evolving knowledge from basic science, nursing knowledge and other ways of knowing, and other disciplines that results in clinical judgment founded on a broad knowledge base.

**[Domain 1] [MSN Essentials I, III, IV, VIII]**

2. Manage person-centered care at the advanced nursing level across the organization/system, provider, patient, and/or population level that focuses on the individual within multiple complicated contexts, including family and/or important others.

**[Domain 2] [MSN Essential II, IV, VII, VIII, IX]**

3. Manage population health that spans the healthcare delivery continuum from public health prevention to disease management of populations.

**[Domains 3, 6, 9] [MSN Essentials VI, VII, VIII, IX]**

4. Synthesize, criticize and apply nursing knowledge, research, scholarship and evidence-based practice to improve health and transform health care.

**[Domains 1, 4, 5, 7, 10] [MSN Essentials I, II, III, IV, V, VIII, IX]**

5. Incorporate principles of quality, safety and implementation science to optimize health and healthcare outcomes.

**[Domains 1, 5, 7] [MSN Essentials I, II, III, IV, VII, VIII, IX]**

6. Collaborate across professions and with care team members, patients, families, communities, and other stakeholders to optimize care, enhance the healthcare experience, and strengthen outcomes.

**[Domains 2, 6, 7] [MSN Essentials V, VI, VII, VIII, IX]**

7. Relate evidence-based methodologies, system-thinking, business and financial acumen to provide safe, quality, evidence-based and equitable care to diverse populations.

**[Domains 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10] [MSN Essentials I, II, III, IV, V, VI, VII, VIII, IX]**

8. Intergrate information and communication technologies and informatics processes to gather data, support care delivery, and inform decision making.

**[Domains 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10] [MSN Essentials I, II, III, IV, V, VII, VIII, IX]**

9. Demonstrate an advanced-level professional nursing identity that encompasses self-reflective practice, commitment to inclusivity and social justice, accountability, collaborative disposition and ethical comportment that reflects nursing's values.

**[Domains 6, 9, 10] [MSN Essentials VI, VII, VIII, IX]**

10. Contribute to an organizational culture that promotes personal health, resilience, lifelong learning and expansion of nursing expertise.

**[Domains 9, 10] [MSN Essential IX]**

## Graduate Admissions Procedure

Admission to graduate study at the Rhode Island College School of Nursing is selective and determined by the quality of the total application. Applications are submitted on-line and are available for the MSN program at <https://www.applyweb.com/ricg/index.ftl>

The application period for the AGACNP option is September 15<sup>th</sup> - February 15<sup>th</sup>. In the event that seat(s) remain open after the February 15th deadline, applications may continue to be accepted for consideration at the discretion of the program director. Contact the MSN program director (D. Servello – [dservello@ric.edu](mailto:dservello@ric.edu)) for further information. Applications for the AGACCNS, Population/Public Health Nursing options, and the Nursing Care Management, Healthcare Quality and Patient Safety, Post-Masters AdultGerontology Acute Care CNS, and the Post-Masters Adult Gerontology Acute Care NP certificate programs are accepted on an on-going basis (i.e., rolling admissions).

Admission requirements include:

1. A completed application accompanied by a \$50 nonrefundable application fee.
2. A baccalaureate degree from an NLNAC or CCNE accredited program.
3. Official transcripts of all undergraduate and graduate records.\*
4. Completion of a course in statistics (MATH 240 or its equivalent) with a minimum grade of C.
5. A minimum cumulative grade point average of 3.00 on a 4.00 scale in undergraduate course work.
6. Current unrestricted licensure for the practice of nursing in Rhode Island.
7. A professional resume.
8. Three professional references (at least one from the clinical area).
9. A brief letter of intent, which includes a statement of goals.
10. Proof of residency is required for in-state tuition.
11. An interview may be required.

## Additional Admission Requirements for Adult/Gerontology Acute Care Students

One year of relevant acute care experience.

**\*International applicants must also submit:**

- Applicants with international degrees must have their transcript evaluated for degree and grade equivalence to that of a regionally accredited institution in the United States and provide an official translated copy of all academic credentials.
- Proof of Residency
- An official report of scores on the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) from international applicants who are from countries where English is not the first language.

## Other Related Information:

1. The Dean of the School of Nursing and the Master's Program Director will inform the candidate regarding acceptance to candidacy after receipt of the recommendation of the Graduate committee. A candidate is not formally accepted into a graduate program until an approved Plan of Study for the appropriate program to which application is made is on file in the School of Nursing Graduate Department Office.

*(Note) Incomplete application materials will be kept for one year. Applicant files not completed within that time will be destroyed and applicants will need to reapply.*

2. Persons who have completed a substantial amount of post-baccalaureate work before applying for admission will have this work evaluated with all other credentials submitted in support of admission. Such applicants should note particularly the requirements for Transfer Credit stated in the [Rhode Island College Graduate Studies Policies and Procedures Manual](#).
3. To be accepted as a graduate degree candidate, applicants are expected to have attained an average of B (3.00 on a 4.00 scale) in their undergraduate work. Under certain circumstances when an application does not meet a requirement for admission, the program may provisionally offer acceptance to an otherwise qualified candidate. Examples include, but are not limited to, academic concerns related to GPA below 3.0, letter of intent, CV, letters of recommendation, or work experience. Under this provision, the applicant will be permitted to take courses on a non-matriculated basis and must achieve a minimum B grade in three required nursing courses. Upon meeting this requirement, the program will matriculate the applicant into the MSN program. Students who are allowed to take classes on a provisional, non-matriculated basis are not eligible for financial aid, graduate assistantships, or scholarships.

### **Non-Matriculated Status**

1. Persons holding a baccalaureate degree who are not candidates for an advanced degree may take courses as a non-matriculating student on a space-available basis and at the discretion of the MSN Director.
2. Non-matriculating students must contact the MSN program director to request enrollment in courses and will follow the same course registration procedure as degree candidates. If non-matriculating students later wish to be admitted to a degree program, they must complete the regular admission procedure.
3. Credits earned at Rhode Island College by a non-matriculating student before admission to a degree program may be used toward degree requirements only upon the recommendation of the student's advisor or Graduate Committee, and with the approval of the Academic Dean. The transfer credit cannot exceed one-fifth of the total credits in the program for the RIC degree (see [Graduate Studies Policies and Procedures Manual](#)).

## **GRADUATE CERTIFICATE OPTIONS**

Admission requirements for the certificate options are the same as for the MSN program.

### **Nursing Care Management**

Students who are interested in population-based care may complete a five-course (NURS 502, 503, 507, 508 and 518) graduate certificate program in Nursing Care Management (NCM). Students who successfully complete the NCM certificate will be able to meet a rapidly emerging need in health care – to prepare nurses for nurse care/case manager positions across health care settings; they may also continue study in the Master of Science program to earn the MSN degree in Population/Public Health Nursing.

### Healthcare Quality and Patient Safety

Students who are interested in quality and safety may complete a five-course (NURS 501, 502, 503, 505, and 519) graduate certificate program in Healthcare Quality and Patient Safety (HQPS). Students who successfully complete the HQPS certificate will be prepared to apply quality & safety principles, tools, and performance measures within a healthcare setting and may continue study in the MSN program to earn the MSN degree.

### Post-MSN Adult Gerontology Acute Care Clinical Nurse Specialist

The C.G.S. in Adult/Gerontology Acute Care for Clinical Nurse Specialists is a certificate program designed for students who already hold a Master's degree in nursing and wish to expand upon their current role as a Clinical Nurse Specialist. Students who successfully complete this 18-credit certificate program, including three prerequisites (Advanced Pathophysiology, Advanced Pharmacology and Advanced Health Assessment) and three nursing courses (530, 610, and 620), are eligible to take the American Nurses Credentialing Center Adult /Gerontology CNS exam (AGCNS-BC) or the American Association of Critical Care Nurses Adult /Gerontology Wellness through Acute Care CNS exam (ACCNS-AG).

### Post-MSN Adult/Gerontology Acute Care Nurse Practitioner

Students who already hold a Master's degree in nursing and wish to expand upon their current role as a Nurse Practitioner can complete three prerequisites (Advanced Pathophysiology, Advanced Pharmacology and Advanced Health Assessment) and three nursing courses (540, 615, and 625). Students who successfully complete this option will be eligible to apply to take the following certification examinations: the American Nurses Credentialing Center; Adult- Gerontology Acute Care (AGACNP-BC) exam; the American Association of Critical Care Nurses; Adult- Gerontology Acute Care NP exam (ACNPC-AG).

## RECOMMENDED PLANS OF STUDY

### **Sample Plans of Study**

Sample Plans of Study can be found [online](#).

### **Restricted Electives**

Students in the MSN program are required to complete one elective course from the following list of restricted electives:

NURS 513 Teaching in Nursing

NURS 515 Using Simulation in Healthcare Provider Education

NURS 518 Nursing Care/Case Management

NURS 519 Quality/Safety for Advanced Practice Nursing

NURS 521 Global Health and Advanced Practice Nursing

NURS 522 Concepts and Practice of Palliative Care

NURS 523 Surgical First Assistant Theory

If a student has a strong rationale for enrolling in a course not identified as a restricted elective, and with approval of the faculty advisor, the student will be allowed to enroll in the alternative course.

## Advisement

Faculty in the School of Nursing serve as advisors to graduate students in nursing. Students are assigned a nursing advisor when they are admitted to the graduate program. The faculty advisor and student plan a program of study before course work begins. The program of study outlines the sequence of courses to be taken. The student retains a written copy of the program and a copy is placed in the student's file. Each semester, an advisement hold will be placed on the student's account. Students will not be able to enroll in any courses until their advisor has lifted the hold. **Graduate students are required to meet with their advisor every semester to plan coursework for the upcoming semester.** The advisor will lift the advisement hold after meeting with the student. Graduate students are encouraged to schedule additional appointments as needed to discuss any matter of concern.

## Blackboard

Blackboard is Rhode Island College's Learning Management System, and will be used to organize course material and deliver online content. Students should familiarize themselves with the blackboard platform by reviewing the content at: <https://help.blackboard.com/Learn/Student>

## PRACTICUM POLICIES

### Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) Certification

Students need to present proof of CPR Certification. CPR Courses are regularly offered by the American Heart Association (1-877-AHA-4CPR or 1-877-242-4277), or Ocean State Educational Seminars, Inc. (651-5777). The required certification is "BLS Provider."

### Advanced Cardiac Life Support (ACLS) Certification

ACLS is required for all MSN students in the Adult/Gerontology Acute Care option and must be completed prior to the start of NURS 530 or 540.

### Background Criminal Identification (BCI)

All Master's students must have a BCI done through [Castle Branch](#), *prior to the start of clinical rotations*. The BCI will be verified by the SON. An information sheet describing how to initiate a background check is available in the MSN Program office.

### RN License

All Master's students will submit a valid copy of their unrestricted RN License(s) for the practice of nursing in the State of RI *prior to the start of clinical rotations*. Rhode Island is a Nurse Licensure Compact (NLC) state. If you are licensed in this state you are eligible to practice nursing in all NLC states. Likewise, if you have a valid license from another NLC state, you are eligible to practice nursing in RI.

## Attendance

Master's students are required to complete a *minimum* of 600 hours of clinical practicum experience over the course of the program. This is the *minimum* expectation required of all Master's students. Faculty, the identified preceptor (as applicable), and the student may determine that additional time is needed to satisfactorily complete the outcomes of the course. Flexibility in scheduling is encouraged; students should negotiate clinical hours each week with the faculty member supervising the clinical experience and the clinical preceptor- as applicable. In the event of an unavoidable absence, the student **must** contact the clinical faculty member and the preceptor to make arrangements to re-schedule the time missed. Failure to do so may result in a Student Performance Improvement Plan.

In the event that a student is placed on a medical leave related to a medical illness, the student must notify the clinical faculty immediately. Students on a medical leave must be medically cleared in order to be able to return to clinical.

## Practicum Placements

Master's student placements will be negotiated between the clinical faculty member, the clinical preceptor, and the student. Prior to each semester, the student should meet with the faculty of the upcoming clinical course to plan placement for the upcoming semester. The student should identify clinical interests and personal objectives and meet with the clinical faculty member to discuss the outcomes of the course and to identify ways that the student's clinical learning needs can be best met. The faculty and student will discuss potential clinical sites and preceptors and identify an agreed upon plan of clinical experiences. The student will submit finalized personal clinical objectives to the clinical faculty for approval; it is essential that these meetings occur prior to the end of the semester before the clinical experience being planned. The student will be responsible for providing the approved objectives and course syllabi to the clinical preceptor as applicable prior to the start of the semester.

Students must correspond with the faculty member **at least weekly** via completion of the required clinical log or journal.

Students must complete the required clinical hours during the semester they are taking the course before final grades are due. If 50% of the semester's required clinical hours are NOT completed prior to mid-semester, students will complete a mid-semester Performance Improvement Plan. If the semester's required clinical hours are not completed when final grades are due, the student will receive an incomplete (I) for the course. *Students with an incomplete will not be allowed to progress to the next theory and clinical course.*

## Typhon Tracking System

The Typhon system will be used to track patient encounters, time logs, and organize clinical experiences. Conference hours are entered in Typhon as well. Clinical log submission for each patient encounter into the Typhon system is mandatory for Acute Care NP students. Each student is responsible for maintaining clinical experience logs. All encounters, whether seen independently, in collaboration with preceptor, or as an observer, requires an entry into Typhon. These records are confidential and should not identify the client by name. Acute Care CNS, Acute Care NP and Population/Public Health students must enter clinical hours on a weekly basis.

**Faculty reserve the right and will periodically verify documented clinical hours with the assigned preceptors.**

## Conference Attendance

Master's students may request to attend a clinical conference as part of the clinical hours requirement. Students must provide the clinical faculty and program option coordinator with a detailed description of the conference. Acute Care student's requests must be approved by the program option coordinator and may not exceed 10% of clinical hours in any semester. Conferences must be aimed toward an advanced practice audience.

## Student Uniform

1. Students in all clinical settings must carry Rhode Island College identification and wear a Rhode Island College name pin. Students must comply with parking and security regulations as specified at each agency.
2. Graduate students should wear attire appropriate to the clinical site and clinical activities. For example, Master's students providing direct care may wear scrubs. Acute Care students not providing direct care may wear a laboratory coat with the appropriate identification. Population/Public Health students may wear attire deemed appropriate for the activity by their clinical preceptor and faculty.
3. Artificial nails are prohibited. Fingernail polish, long fingernails, excessive makeup, jewelry, and rings other than wedding or class rings are not appropriate for the clinical setting. Female and male students with long hair will wear their hair so that it does not fall on the collar. Student attire will be neat and clean at all times. Faculty reserve the right to dismiss a student from the clinical area who, in their judgment, does not appear professional.

## Transporting Clients

Under **NO** circumstances shall students transport clients in any motor vehicle.

## Incident Reports

If an incident report ([exposure](#) or [non-exposure](#)) is indicated in a practicum setting, it will be completed according to agency policy and a report will be submitted to the School of Nursing Graduate Chair, the Master's Program Director, and the Clinical Coordinator immediately, or at least within 24 hours of the incident. The report is signed by the student who was involved and by the faculty member responsible for supervision of the student. The report becomes part of the student's official file. Copies of the incident reports for exposure and non-exposure are found in the [appendix](#).

## Student Performance Improvement Plans

If a student is not progressing satisfactorily in a didactic or clinical course, the student and professor will complete a Performance Improvement Plan identifying area(s) of improvement, a specific plan, and an associated time frame for completion. Copies will be distributed to the student, the faculty member, and the Master's Program Director.

## Student Liability Insurance

Graduate students should maintain their own malpractice insurance. In addition, students who are actively enrolled as majors in nursing at Rhode Island College are covered by a Medical Malpractice Policy by the Board of Governors for Higher Education.



### **Privacy Policy**

During clinical rotations, students shall not provide care for any client with whom they are personally acquainted, including members of the Rhode Island College community (i.e., faculty, fellow students, or staff). Should students become aware that they have inadvertently been given such an assignment, they are to notify the instructor or preceptor immediately.

### **Cosigning of Orders**

Acute Care NP student orders must be co-signed by the Licensed Independent Practitioner (LIP) with whom they are assigned in the clinical setting.

## **ACADEMIC POLICIES**

### **Leave of Absence from Nursing Courses**

A graduate student who interrupts their nursing program of study for one semester or more, due to military service, prolonged illness or other unusual circumstances, whether before or after they have completed the work prescribed in their Plan of Study, should apply for a Leave of Absence. The request should be made in writing using the [Request for Leave of Absence form](#) and be endorsed by the student's advisor and be sufficiently specific to determine whether the leave is warranted. The decision to grant the leave of absence will be made by the Master's Program Director in consultation with the Dean. A leave of absence has the effect of suspending time limitations such as those for completion of the degree or for the removal of incomplete grades. Accordingly, a leave will be granted only for sufficient reason and only if it is to be for one year or less. Students may apply in writing for a **maximum** of one additional year if circumstances warrant.

A student who interrupts their program for two semesters without notifying the Graduate Nursing office may be eligible to register for course(s) needed to complete the program on a space available basis. If the student interrupts their nursing program for three semesters or longer without having submitted an official leave of absence request, the student must apply for re-admission to the Master's in Nursing program and must meet current admission requirements.

### **Withdrawal from the Masters Program**

Once a student has been admitted and officially matriculated into a masters program, they must notify the MSN Director **in writing** if they wish to withdraw from the program. This is necessary whether they have been on a leave of absence or active in their courses. A matriculated student who withdraws from a program after having completed any courses will be logged as a withdrawal from program. If a student has accepted admission but has not yet completed any courses, the withdrawal will be logged as a withdrawn application, whether or not they were matriculated.

### **Study Option Transfer Request Policy**

Master's students are admitted to one of the following study options: Adult/Gerontology Acute CNS or NP and Population/Public Health. Transfer among study options is competitive, based on meeting overall admission criteria. Admission into some study options, including the Acute Care NP is extremely competitive. Students wishing to transfer to a different study option must:

- First, discuss the proposed transfer with their academic advisor;

- Next, discuss the proposed transfer with the MSN Coordinator;
- If transfer is desired, submit to the program director (1) a letter of intent, which includes a rationale for the requested change and a discussion related to how the personal/professional goals have changed; and (2) an updated resume.

A request for change in a study option will be considered by the Graduate Committee during the next admission cycle, typically in the spring semester. Additional materials and an interview may be requested. Students will be notified of the Committee's decision by the Program Director.

## Grading System

### Cum Index Grade Ranges

4.0	A	93-100
3.67	A-	90-92
3.33	B+	87-89
3.00	B	84-86
2.67	B-	80-83
2.33	C+	77-79
2.00	C	74-76
1.67	C-	70-73
1.33	D+	67-69
1.00	D	63-66
.67	D-	60-62
.00	F	0-60

## Retention

All graduate students are expected to maintain a cumulative average of B (3.00) or better in their graduate program. Students who do not maintain a cumulative B (3.00) average will have their status reviewed by the Master's Program Director. **Students who achieve less than a B, including a grade of 'U', in any course will be placed on probationary status.** Students on probationary status must achieve a B or better in each required course over the next 9 credits. Two grades of B- or lower are sufficient cause for consideration of dismissal; the decision regarding students' status will be made by the Graduate Department Graduate and Student Outcomes Committee (GDSGOC). Students may be required to repeat a course at the discretion of the Master's Program Director.

## Petitions

Students seeking appeal of Master's program policies related to academic progression can petition in writing to the Graduate Committee. A description of the petition process is below. The [petition form](#) is available from the [advising and orientation guide](#) and is also included in the [appendix](#) of this handbook. Petitions are due to the Graduate Department Student and Graduate Outcomes Committee by the Monday of the full week prior to the start of classes in the fall and spring semesters.

## Process of Submission of Petitions

The following steps outline the process a student will follow to petition a waiver of a School of Nursing Policy\* that is affecting the individual student.

1. The student brings the concern to the attention of their advisor within 10 working days of becoming aware of the situation.
2. The student completes the Petition Form. The form must be signed by the advisor, or in the absence of the advisor, the program director.
3. The student submits the completed form, along with supporting documents, to the chair of the Graduate Student and Graduate Outcomes Committee within five (5) working days of having met with their advisor.
4. The Graduate Student and Graduate Outcomes Committee will consider the petition at its next scheduled meeting.
1. The Graduate Student and Graduate Outcomes Committee will forward its decision to the student and their advisor within five (5) working days of their scheduled meeting.
2. If the decision is unsatisfactory, the student has the option to appeal the decision. The Academic Grievance Procedure that outlines this process is available in the [Manual of Academic Policies and Procedures](#) section 11.

\*The above process is to be utilized only when the student is appealing a *policy* of the School of Nursing. If you are appealing a decision made by an individual faculty member (grade dispute) or if you have an issue with a College Policy (e.g., disagreement regarding dismissal/probation) you should utilize the Academic Grievance Procedure.

## Complaints and Grievances

The [Manual of Academic Policies and Procedures](#) clearly distinguishes between a complaint and a grievance in Section 11:

- (a) A *complaint* may be any point at issue between a faculty member and a student in which a student feels that an abridgement of personal rights or benefits has occurred. A complaint may, but need not, constitute a grievance.
- (b) A *grievance* means a difference, presented in writing that may arise between a faculty member and a student with respect to, but not necessarily limited to:
  - i. violation of established academic policies and regulations (e.g., examination policies, advisement policies, registration procedures);
  - ii. arbitrary and capricious grading practices;
  - iii. violation of the student's academic freedom, defined in the *Student Handbook* as... "the freedom to inquire, to discuss, to seek evidence, to speak, and to exchange ideas";
  - iv. failure to meet obligations to students (adherence to regular class hours, taking timely action, or correcting errors."

As noted in the *Manual of Academic Policies and Procedures*, the primary purpose of the grievance procedure is to secure, at the lowest level possible, an equitable solution to the problems of students who have disputes with either, an academic unit or classroom, or grading conduct of faculty.

According to MSN program policy, student complaints are first discussed with the faculty member involved. If a resolution is not reached, the student may then institute a formal grievance as outlined below.

Grade Grievances. Consistent with the *Manual of Academic Policies and Procedures*, MSN students who believe that they have received a grade in an arbitrary or capricious manner, meaning that the grading was not properly applied, may request that the grade be reconsidered. Students must first discuss the issue with the faculty member. If resolution is not reached, the student must submit a written grievance to the faculty member within 10 workingdays of the initial discussion (except in the case of final grades and then no later than the 10<sup>th</sup> working day of next full semester). The grievance must include a maximum one-page summary stating the specific complaint, the specific action upon which it is based, and the remedy being sought. The faculty member will meet with the student to discuss the grievance within 10 days of receipt of the grievance. The grievant and faculty may each choose to bring one person to the meeting from the RIC community who is not a family member of either participant. The faculty member will issue a decision in writing to the student within 10 working days of the meeting,

Academic Dismissal Grievance. Following the procedure as outlined above, if the issue is not resolved at the Chair level, the student may submit the grievance in writing to the Dean within 10 working days, and the Dean will meet the student within 10 working days of receipt. The Dean shall meet either jointly or separately with participants and each may choose to bring one person to the meeting from the RIC community who is not a family member of either participant. The Dean will issue a decision in writing within 10 days. If not resolved at the Dean's level, the grievant may appeal to the Provost & Vice President for Academic Affairs (the Provost), following the same procedure. If not resolved at the Provost level, the student may appeal to the President by submitting the grievance to the President within 10 working days of receipt of the Provost's decision. The President will meet with the student and faculty member (either jointly or separately) to discuss the grievance within 10 working days of receipt of the grievance. Each may again choose to bring one person to the meeting from the RIC community who is not a family member of either participant. The President shall issue a decision within 10 working days of the meeting, presenting reasons, in writing, to the grievant, the faculty member involved, the Department Chair, the appropriate Dean, and the Provost.

## Registration

General registration procedures are described [online](#). Nursing majors may register online for required nursing courses during the regular registration period. NOTE: each student is assigned a unique enrollment appointment window. **Students must be within their enrollment appointment window to enroll in a course.** Enrollment appointments can be viewed in the MyRIC account. Some courses may require enrollment by the department. Students should contact the Graduate Nursing office or their advisor if they experience any issues with enrollment.

## Summer Courses

Selected courses are offered during summer sessions. View the [course bulletin](#) for a list of available courses. Master's students are encouraged to complete **elective course work** during the summer after consultation with their advisor.

## HEALTH AND WELLNESS POLICIES

### Health & Immunization Requirements

All Nursing Graduate Students enrolled in a clinical course must have the following information on file in RIC HEALTH SERVICES, located in Brown Hall on the RIC campus. Tel (401) 456-8055; FAX: (401) 456-8890.

1. **COVID-19 vaccination** required (1-2 doses based on manufacturer of vaccine) **AND** one Booster (when due)
2. An Admission **Physical Exam**
3. **One** dose of **Tetanus-Diphtheria-Pertussis (Tdap)** if it has been 2 or more years since the last dose of Td.
4. **Two MMR's (Measles, Mumps, Rubella) or** blood **titers** confirming immunity.
5. **Three** doses of Hepatitis **B** vaccine. A **Hepatitis B Surface Antibody titer** to confirm sero-conversion is recommended 1-2 months after the final dose.
6. Provider documented proof of **Chicken Pox** disease or **Varicella titer** confirming immunity **or Varicella vaccine** (2 doses).
7. Annual **QuantiFERON Gold (QTF) negative blood test**
8. **or** an initial **2-step PPD\*\*** tuberculin skin test **and yearly** PPD updates (or Chest X-Ray if PPD positive and **yearly TB assessment**, which is completed at Student Health Services).
9. Flu vaccine each fall semester.
10. Color Blind Testing

\*Health care workers born on or before December 31, 1956 are only required to have documentation of **one** dose of measles, mumps and rubella **or titers** confirming immunity.

\*\***2-Step PPD** – two separate TB tests planted at least one week apart but not more than a year apart prior to entering nursing clinical.

### Rhode Island College, Browne Hall, Immunization Notice

If you wish to schedule an appointment for immunization at Health Services, please note:

1. All immunizations must be **pre-paid** at the [Bursar's Office](#) located on East Campus in Building #4. Office hours are 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday-Friday. Cash, check or credit cards (Discover, Master Card or Visa) are accepted. A receipt from the Bursars must be presented at Health Services to schedule an appointment.
2. Health Services does **not** bill insurance companies (private or school insurance). Most major carriers do not reimburse for immunizations given to students over 18. Check with your insurance company for details.
3. Plan to spend 15 minutes at Health Services after the vaccine is administered to be sure there is no reaction. If you feel you have had adequate immunizations in the past but are unable to access your records (from provider, high school, or other college), you may elect to have a blood titer drawn to document immunity. These titers are available through Health Services.

## **Student Self-Identification of Risk Factors**

Students with any condition such as, but not limited to pregnancy, viral infections, allergies, immunosuppression, surgical wounds, or mobility issues that potentially places them and/or patients at risk in the clinical setting are responsible for informing the instructor of their condition. This information should be discussed with each clinical instructor prior to the start of the semester, or as soon as the students become aware of the condition. Students who are unable to work due to medical conditions are not allowed to participate in clinical activities until they have received medical clearance.

## **Professionalism**

**Philosophy:** Nursing students at Rhode Island College are expected to conduct themselves as professionals at all times. This professionalism includes dress, in-class attendance, academic integrity, and the successful completion of course responsibilities as well as behavior in nursing courses on campus and at practicum locations. Adherence to student policies of the College and the Nursing School fosters professionalism. Non-adherence to the professional standards of behavior requires corrective action. Failure by the student to comply with expectations will result in discipline ranging from a written Performance Improvement Plan to dismissal from the Nursing major.

Rhode Island College School of Nursing is committed to health promotion and maintenance of a healthy lifestyle. To fulfill this expectation, nursing students must not misuse substances during their participation in any aspect of the nursing program including classroom, laboratory, and clinical settings. Substance Use Disorder is a major problem that compromises the learning environment and impairs judgment interfering with the ability to provide safe, effective, and supportive care. Appropriate treatment of Substance Use Disorder is critical to nursing education and practice.

## **Substance Abuse Policy**

Substance Use Disorder is defined as a disease that affects a person's cognitive function and behavior and interferes with one's ability to fulfill role expectations. A student who misuses substances, while in the academic or clinical setting, either separately or in combination, may include substances such as, alcohol, over-the-counter medication, illegal drugs, prescribed medications, inhalants, or synthetic designer drugs.

Procedures: This health problem must be immediately addressed when identified within the nursing student population. Following are the procedures to be followed when a student is thought to be misusing substances.

1. Remove the student to a private area. Discuss the sign(s) and/or behavior(s) observed and allow the student to provide an explanation. Ask the student about the use of any substance and, if used, what, when, and how much was used and by what route it was taken. When signs/behaviors of substance misuse are observed during a clinical practicum session, the student is removed from the area and relieved of further nursing responsibilities for the day. A written Performance Improvement Plan is initiated, a make-up assignment may be given, and the student is instructed to arrange for transportation home.
2. A report of observed student behavior is prepared by the involved faculty member in concert with the clinical preceptor when applicable and is submitted to the Master's Program Director. A copy of the report will be placed in the student's file.

3. A group conference will be convened within one week. The conference group consists of the involved student and faculty member, the Master's Program Director, and the Chairperson. The purpose of the group conference will be to convey concern for the student's welfare and to present the student with procedural requirements. If substance misuse is the problem, these procedures require student agreement to enter into a "Student Wellness Contract" for professional evaluation of Substance Use Disorder and determination of a treatment plan.
4. During the conference, the academic consequences resulting from misuse of substances will be explained. The student will be requested to agree to the contract and to confirm understanding of both the terms and the academic consequences of the contract by signature. Should the student choose not to agree to the contract, they will be dismissed from the nursing major.
  - a. Participation in clinical nursing courses will not be permitted until the terms of the contract are fulfilled.
  - b. A semester grade of "I" (Incomplete) or "W" (Withdraw) will be assigned for these courses depending upon the amount of course work completed to date, the time remaining in the semester, the ability of the student to satisfactorily complete the course requirements and the treatment recommendation of the professional evaluator.
5. Following the initial screening, the evaluator will determine the prescribed treatment. If no treatment is required, the evaluator will prepare a written report to the Master's Program Director and Chairperson. Upon receipt of the written recommendation of the professional evaluator that no treatment for Substance Use Disorder is required, the student may return to all courses in progress.

When treatment is indicated, completion terms of the contract must be fulfilled. Upon completion of the program, the student may resume participation in clinical nursing courses contingent upon the approval of a written request for reinstatement submitted for the semester to which they desire to return. If additional misuse of substances occurs subsequent to implementation of these procedures, the student will be dismissed from the nursing major. (Sources noted in Policy Manual)

### **Prevention of and/exposure to HIV, HBV, and HCV Infections Policy**

In order to reduce the possibility of exposure to nursing students from HUMAN IMMUNODEFICIENCY VIRUS (HIV), HEPATITIS B VIRUS (HBV), and HEPATITIS C VIRUS (HCV), Rhode Island College School of Nursing has adopted a policy encompassing vaccination for HBV, and education and prevention techniques for HIV and HCV including standard precautions. The focus of this policy is the education about prevention and exposure to body fluids and transmission of blood-borne pathogens including, but not limited to, HIV, HBV, and HCV. The attached procedures, guidelines, and forms have been developed in compliance with State and Federal laws, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) Guidelines, and the policies and practices of Rhode Island College and affiliating clinical practicum placements. The School of Nursing recognizes individual rights, equal opportunity, voluntary testing, and confidentiality of test results and health records.

The purpose of the policy is to:

1. Protect students from exposure to body fluids and blood-borne pathogens and other potentially infectious materials.
  2. Outline the HBV immunization protocol for students.
  3. Describe the policies regarding students caring for HIV, HBV, and HCV infected clients.
  4. Describe the policies regarding students with HIV infection.
  5. Describe the Exposure Control Plan (ECP) for students.
- *Protecting the student from exposure to HIV/HBV/HCV*  
The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommends that Standard Blood and Body Fluid Precautions

be used with all clients regardless of known or suspected blood-borne pathogens.



- **Standard Blood and Body Fluid Precautions**

Standard precautions are intended to prevent parenteral, mucous membrane, and non-intact skin exposures of nursing students to blood-borne pathogens. Blood is the single most important source of HIV, HBV, HCV, and other blood-borne pathogens in clinical settings. The following Standard Blood and Body Fluid Precautions can eliminate the risk of work exposure to HIV, HBV, and HCV. These guidelines should be used with all clients regardless of known or unknown risk factors.

The guidelines for Standard Blood and Body Fluid Precautions include:

- (1) Students who come into direct contact with body fluids of clients should wear *gloves*. This includes direct client care, handling of soiled linen or lab specimens, etc. The gloves should be changed with each client and hands washed immediately after removing gloves.
- (2) *Masks, protective eyewear, and gowns* should be worn during all procedures that are likely to generate an exposure event.
- (3) *Wounds and skin sites* that have been in contact with blood or body fluids should be washed with soap and water; mucous membranes should be flushed with water. (No evidence exists that using antiseptics for wound care or expressing fluid by squeezing the wound further reduced the risk for blood-borne pathogen transmission; however, the use of antiseptics is not contraindicated. The application of caustic agents (e.g., bleach) or the injection of antiseptics or disinfectants into the wound is not recommended). (CDC Guidelines, 2001)
- (4) To prevent *needle stick injuries*, students should immediately dispose of needles and syringes in an appropriate sharps container. They should NOT recap used needles, purposely bend, or break needles or in any way manipulate used syringes. This holds true for scalpels and other sharp disposable items.
- (5) To minimize the need for *mouth-to-mouth resuscitation*, ambu bags, barriers, or other ventilation devices should be used when available.
- (6) Students who have *exudative lesions or weeping dermatitis* should refrain from all direct client care and from handling client equipment until the condition resolves.
- (7) All students who participate in invasive procedures should wear gloves, gown, mask, and protective eyewear.
- (8) Students assisting in *vaginal deliveries and cesarean sections* should wear gloves, gowns, masks, protective eyewear, and footwear.
- (9) *Breast milk and saliva*: occupational exposure via breast milk and saliva have not been documented. However, the viruses have been isolated from these secretions and therefore standard precautions are required. Gloves should be used during oral exams. Nurses having extensive exposure to human breast milk should routinely use gloves while handling specimens.
- (10) *Human tissues and other body fluids*: Standard precautions apply to human tissues and the following fluids: cerebrospinal, peritoneal, synovial, pleural, pericardial, and amniotic fluids. Standard precautions apply to feces, nasal secretions, sputum, sweat, tears, urine, and vomitus.

- **Hepatitis B Immunization Protocol**

The Hepatitis B vaccination series will be initiated if indicated. Hepatitis B vaccine will be available to students through Student Health Services. Students are encouraged to inquire about HBV immunization at their place of employment. All students who decline to comply with the HBV requirement shall be advised of their risk and be required to sign the Hepatitis B Vaccination Declination Form. Refusal to comply with the above requirement does not negate future availability of immunization. Documentation of compliance or refusal shall be included in the student health record in Rhode Island College Health Services.

- *Policies regarding students caring for HIV, HBV, and HCV infected clients*

The Rhode Island College School of Nursing believes that master's nursing students have a responsibility to provide care to all clients and that refusal to care for an individual with HIV, HBV, or HCV is contrary to the ethics of the nursing profession. The School of Nursing recognizes that infectious diseases pose considerable psychological as well as physical threats to students and will address any fears, misinformation or prejudices the student may be experiencing by:

- (1) Providing the most current information on occupational transmission of viruses.
- (2) Providing thorough instructions on the ways students can prevent exposure.

1. *Policies regarding students who have been diagnosed with HIV/HBV/HCV*

The following statements summarize the School of Nursing policy regarding HIV-infected students:

- (1) The School of Nursing will not consider HIV status in the admission decision. The exclusion of people with HIV infection constitutes unwarranted discrimination. An infected individual will be treated in the same manner as any student diagnosed as having any other illness, injury, or disability.
- (2) Students with HIV will be allowed access to clinical, academic, and College-related social activities as their medical condition permits. In the instances where a student is unable to fulfill their responsibilities, the School of Nursing faculty will seek advice according to the Rhode Island College Handbook of Policies Practices and Regulations.
- (3) HIV positive students are encouraged to seek competent medical and psychological consultation early in the disease.
- (4) No specific information about HIV status will be documented in the student's file. Information will not be shared verbally or in writing with anyone unless the student requests so in writing. A student who informs the faculty and/or staff of their HIV/HBV/HCV status will be accorded confidentiality by faculty and staff members in whom he or she confides.
- (5) Students with known deficiencies are at an increased risk for hospital-acquired infections. Clinical assignments for these students will be evaluated accordingly.

2. *Exposure Control Plan – Post-exposure evaluation and follow-up*

- A. Nursing Simulation Lab

- B. Students exposed to blood or other body fluids in the Nursing Simulation Lab will follow the Post Exposure Evaluation and Follow-up Procedure (as described in the Rhode Island College Occupational Exposure to Blood-borne Pathogens Exposure Control Plan Section IV). In the event to the Dean of Nursing and the Safety and Security Department (Campus Security Office). If no faculty member is present in the Lab, the student is to report the incident to the School of Nursing Chairperson for appropriate action. In addition to the above, the supervising faculty member is responsible for completing a Rhode Island College School of Nursing Incident Report and submitting it to the Rhode Island College School of Nursing Dean within 24 hours. The exposed student will be referred to Health Services Office or Personal Care Provider for follow-up medical care, including counseling. The College Insurance Rider provides financial coverage for follow-up.

- C. Off-campus Clinical Experiences

Students exposed to blood or other body fluids during an off campus clinical experience will follow the initial Post Exposure Evaluation and Follow-up Procedure of the respective agency. For follow-up and further testing/intervention, the exposed student will be referred to the Rhode Island College Health Services Office or personal care provider. In addition, the supervising faculty member will initiate the process by reporting the incident to the School of Nursing Dean immediately after the incident. The supervising faculty member is also responsible for completing a Rhode Island College School of Nursing Incident Report (see pages 30-31) and submitting it to the Rhode Island College School of Nursing Dean within 24 hours. In addition, the supervising faculty member will provide the student with the pertinent sections of

the CDC's US Public Health Service Guidelines for the Management of Occupational Exposures to HBV, HCV, and HIV and Recommendations for Post Exposure Prophylaxis.  
<https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/rr5011a1.htm>

## SELECTED POLICIES

### **Students with Disabilities**

Rhode Island College is committed to providing accommodations for students with disabilities and supporting them in achieving their academic goals. Rhode Island College students with disabilities who wish to request reasonable accommodations must meet with a member of the Disabilities Services Center's staff. To make an appointment, please call us at 401-456-2776 or TTY (via RI Relay) 711. For more information, visit the Disability Services Center's [website](#).

Note: "Students seeking Testing, and/or Classroom accommodations should request accommodations as soon as possible - after enrolling in classes for the upcoming semester or at least within the first two weeks of the semester." To receive academic accommodations at the college for any nursing class please meet with your professor at the beginning of the semester to submit the appropriate forms.

Permanent disabilities should be documented with the Disability Service Center. Accommodations that may be appropriate will depend on individual circumstances. Temporary conditions such as infectious disease, broken bones, or medical conditions related to standard pregnancy are not recognized by the ADA as eligible for ADA protection or disability-related accommodations per federal disability law such as the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, amended in 2008. Some medical conditions that occur during pregnancy may qualify for reasonable accommodations under the ADA. Disability status will be verified, and evaluation will be made whether a requested accommodation is reasonable. An accommodation is not considered reasonable if it poses a direct threat to the health or safety of the student or others, if making the accommodation requires a substantial modification in an essential element of the curriculum, if it lowers academic standards, or poses an undue administrative or financial burden. Essential clinical skills must be demonstrated, with or without an accommodation, and the use of an intermediary will normally not be considered a reasonable accommodation.

### **Code of Academic Honesty**

The School of Nursing at Rhode Island College recognizes that the nursing profession is based on a standard of honesty and personal and professional integrity. In order to achieve the mission of the College and the School of Nursing, and develop the high ethical standards required for nursing practice, academic honesty is an integral part of the nursing program. Students and faculty are jointly responsible for maintaining an honest environment and all must work together to ensure the success of the academic honesty policy. All students within the School of Nursing are expected to maintain the code of academic honesty. This means that all academic work is presented without plagiarism, cheating, or unauthorized

assistance.

**The Goals of the Academic Honesty Policy in the School of Nursing are to:**

- Promote a culture of academic honesty within the School of Nursing.
- Increase understanding of acts that are designated as academically dishonest behaviors.
- Maintain the academic reputation of the School of Nursing.
- Clearly define the process related to matters of academic dishonesty.

**Violation of the Code of Academic Honesty**

Incidents of academic dishonesty will be adjudicated through the College's usual disciplinary process. Specifically, when a faculty member suspects a student has committed academic dishonesty, the faculty member will confront the student and may determine the appropriate action to be taken. Penalties could include repercussions on the assignment/test, up through failure for the course. A student who disagrees with the faculty member's decision may appeal to the Academic Integrity Board; or a faculty member may elect to send the case immediately to the Board without passing judgment. The Board has a full range of sanctions available to it, from a warning up through suspension or expulsion from the College.

**Behaviors that constitute Academic Dishonesty are prohibited. Examples of academic dishonesty include but are not limited to the following:**

(Adopted from Academic Honesty policies from West Hills Community College, University of Maryland Baltimore, School of Nursing; University of Rochester, University of Arkansas/Fayetteville, University of Houston/Clear Lake, University of Michigan, and Rhode Island College Handbook of Policies, Practices and Regulations).

- Plagiarism – Any attempt to present someone else's work as one's own, on quizzes, examinations, reports, or term papers, etc., constitutes plagiarism, an act closely analogous to the theft of money or goods to any form of swindling or fraud, and in the academic world, just as deplorable. There are various forms of plagiarism of which the following are most common:
  - **Word-for-word plagiarism.** This includes (a) the submission of another person's work as one's own; (b) the submission of work from any source whatever (book, magazine, or newspaper article, unpublished paper, or thesis) without proper acknowledgement by footnote or reference within the text of the paper; (c) the submission of any part of another's work without proper use of the quotation marks.
  - **Patchwork plagiarism.** This consists of piecing together of unacknowledged phrases and sentences quoted verbatim (or nearly verbatim) from a variety of sources. The mere reshuffling of other people's words does not constitute "original" work.
  - **Unacknowledged paraphrase.** It is perfectly legitimate to set forth another author's facts or ideas in one's own words, but if one is genuinely indebted to the other author for these facts or ideas, the debt must be acknowledged by footnote or reference within the text of the paper.
- Unauthorized assistance:
  - Using books, notes, calculators and technological devices in an unauthorized manner to assist with quizzes, exams or lab work.
  - Copying answers to an exam.
  - Giving or receiving answers to a scheduled exam.
  - Submitting work done by another individual and portraying it as one's own.

- Providing false information:
  - Giving false reasons (in advance or after the fact) for failure to complete academic work. This includes, for example, giving false excuses for failure to attend an exam or attend the clinical practicum.
  - Falsifying the results of any laboratory or clinical work or fabricating any data or information, including patient related information.
  - Giving false information or testimony in connection with any investigation or hearing under this policy.
  - Presenting previously submitted academic work and portraying it as new material.
  - Multiple Submissions: Submitting for credit, when a student has not been given permission to do so, any work that is the same or substantially the same as work that has been submitted for credit in another course. Many professors allow reworking or building on prior work; however, multiple submissions are permitted only with the prior permission of the instructor(s), and only when the student acknowledges the multiple submission in the work itself.
- Theft:
  - Procuring unauthorized materials related to academic work such as exams, grade books, and class files.

Faculty and students share the responsibility for upholding the Academic Honesty Policy. Students are expected to report instances of academic dishonesty to the faculty. A faculty member is responsible for confronting a student who violates the code and determining the appropriate action to be taken with respect to the class. As noted in the [Graduate Studies Policy and Procedure Manual](#) a faculty member may take action up to and including failing a student accused of academic dishonesty. In all cases, a report describing the nature of the dishonesty and subsequent action taken by the faculty member shall be filed with the Vice President for Academic Affairs. Additionally, the faculty member may recommend that the Academic Integrity Board recommend further action. In the case of graduate students, the faculty member will also inform the Director of the Master's program of the nature of the dishonesty and the subsequent action taken by the faculty member and may recommend that further action be taken.

In the case of graduate students, the director of the Master's Program may convey the recommendations of a penalty of probation or dismissal from the program to the academic Dean of the school in which the student is enrolled (revised by vote of the Council (May 3, 2013), and approved by the President (May 24, 2013).

The School of Nursing reserves the right to impose additional penalties when students have been found in violation of the code of Academic Honesty, including dismissal from the School of Nursing. Such penalties will be imposed by the Dean in consultation with the faculty member. Students have the right to appeal to the academic Integrity Board. The appeals procedure is outlined in the *MANUAL OF ACADEMIC POLICIES AND PROCEDURES*. All graduate students will be asked to sign an attestation stating they have read the Academic Honesty statement and attest to maintaining academic honesty in all academic assignments, clinical documentation and to maintain professional integrity

## Social Media Policy

**HIPPA – Compliant use of Mobile Devices, Social Media and the Internet** - The purpose of this policy is to maintain the protection of sensitive and confidential information related to the School of Nursing and uphold the professional reputation of the School of Nursing and Rhode Island College. This policy applies to the use of mobile devices, social media, and internet communications related to confidential information about the School of Nursing (including the faculty, staff, students, classroom and clinical activities), patients, and (SON) clinical affiliates.

SON students, faculty and staff must always protect individuals' rights to privacy and confidentiality, and communicate sensitive and confidential information in accordance with the **Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)** and the **Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)**. Social media are web-based or mobile technologies used for interactive communication. RICSON encourages responsible use of Mobile Devices to access electronic information that can be helpful in forming plans of care for patients and for professional communication. Examples of social media include but are not limited to, collaborative projects (e.g., Wikipedia), blogs and microblogs, social networking sites (Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, Snapchat, TikTok, Twitter, YouTube, etc.), virtual game worlds, and virtual social worlds.

Members of the SON community are expected to observe the American Nurses Association's (ANA) Principles for Social Networking (American Nurses Association, 2011. Navigating the World of Social Media).

### 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. Nurses should bring content that could harm a patient's privacy, rights, or welfare to the attention of appropriate authorities.
6. Nurses should participate in developing institutional policies governing online conduct.

The policy requires that all:

- Be aware of the necessity of maintaining professional boundaries while using electronic media.
- Follow HIPAA guidelines at all times. Identifiable information concerning patients/clinical activities must not be posted in any online forum.
- Protect confidential, sensitive, and proprietary information. Do not share or post any information related to nurse-patient contact or about the SON.
- Do not post comments on social media sites about patients, clinical facilities, employees of facilities, faculty or other students as these posts violate the individual's right to privacy and may incur liability – even if the posts do not specifically identify individuals.
- Do not use mobile devices to take photos of patients or patient information.
- Use devices only authorized by faculty and clinical affiliates.
- Have a responsibility to report any breach of confidentiality or privacy to a School of Nursing administrator or faculty member.

Consequences:

- Violations of patient privacy will be subject to HIPAA and FERPA procedures/guidelines and

consequences.

- Students who share confidential or unprofessional communication may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal from the program.

### **Classroom Etiquette (In-person and virtual)**

Class participation and attendance are expected. Students who are unable to attend class should notify the faculty member in advance. Students should come to class prepared, having completed all assignments so that constructive class participation is likely. Students will be engaged and respectful of others in the classroom; as reflected by not talking while others are speaking, using electronic device only for class activities, being on time and staying until the class ends. Students who do not conform to expected classroom etiquette may be asked to leave the classroom.

### **Cancellation of Classes**

Students are informed about cancellation of classes or clinical practice, e.g., snow days, by announcements on local radio stations, communications from individual instructors, or by visiting the College website. Calling the School of Nursing office is NOT APPROPRIATE. The current [Student Handbook](#) contains complete information about policies and rules. Students in the nurse anesthesia option follow the SJHSNA Student Handbook during the clinical internship.

## NURSING SIMULATION LAB

### **Mission**

To prepare students for professional, safe, and equitable nursing practice through innovative, experiential learning in a simulation environment.

### **Vision**

To be a regionally recognized leader of simulation-based learning, research, information and technology use for improving healthcare and outcomes.

### **Location**

The Rhode Island Nursing Education Center (RINEC) is located at South Street Landing, 350 Eddy Street, Providence, RI. The NEC includes multiple high fidelity simulated rooms, health assessment laboratories, practice rooms, standardized patient rooms, and classrooms in a high tech setting. The various areas are used for both scheduled and independent learning and practice.

### **The Rhode Island Nursing Education Center - RINEC**

Nursing is a profession of practitioners. As nursing faculty, we are committed to preparing students to practice the art and science of professional nursing. The Nursing Simulation Lab plays a vital role in enhancing students' preparedness to practice through a multimedia approach that combines faculty-directed and independent learning. Students learn the rationale for nursing actions, and correctly and safely practice many of the cognitive and psychomotor skills needed to work with clients to promote, maintain and restore health. The laboratory also serves as a resource to faculty. Multimedia and audiovisuals including videos, models, and computers contribute to faculty development and enhance and facilitate teaching.

## RESOURCES

The faculty of the School of nursing recognize that MSN students are generally employed, however, to succeed in the Graduate program, caution should be used in scheduling work hours. This recommendation is based on the belief that an excessive employment commitment interferes with the educational experience of students, including opportunities for participation in cultural, social, and other activities.

### **Assistantships**

Opportunities are available for students to apply for graduate assistantships. For further information contact the Graduate Department Chairperson – Dr. Servello – [dservello@ric.edu](mailto:dservello@ric.edu).

### **Financial Aid**

The Office of Student Financial Aid (Building 3) at the College administers a program of grants, loans and part-time employment opportunities for students who require financial assistance. Their phone number is 456-8033 - [financialaid@ric.edu](mailto:financialaid@ric.edu)

Emergency funds for students are available through the RICochet Emergency Grant and through the School of Nursing.



### **Bulletin Boards**

The Graduate student bulletin board is located in the Graduate Student Lounge. Information related to Graduate students' activities, such as certification information and relevant professional publications are posted on the bulletin board.

### **Graduate Student Manual, College Catalog, and Student Handbook**

[\*Graduate Studies Manual\*](#), [\*The College Catalog\*](#), and the [\*Rhode Island College Student Handbook\*](#) are important sources of information for students. These publications may be obtained from the College's website: <https://www.ric.edu>.

### **Additional Resources**

#### **Library**

Students are encouraged to become familiar with the library resources located at: [Adams Library](#)  
Adams Library phone number is 401456-8125 for research help.

Students may also link google scholar to our RIC library as a quick way to look up articles. See below:



Google Scholar is a special web search engine that finds you scholarly / academic journal articles. Sometimes you can download the journal articles Google Scholar finds right away. But sometimes the articles Google Scholar finds are not free to download. However, the RIC Library may have them. You can connect Google Scholar to the RIC library website to see if we have the scholarly academic journal articles.

Go to <http://scholar.google.com/>

Then Click Settings at the top of the page

Then Click: Library links on the left side

Search For **Rhode Island College** and *ONLY* check these boxes below



Click

Then search for articles in Google Scholar



Any articles with links on the right-side you can download



## Lib Guides

Helpful lib guides are also posted at the RIC library and links may be found on the main library page, or at the following links:

[Resources for MSN Students](#) (contains information, resources and templates related to completion of the master's project).

[NURS: Graduate Nursing Advising & Orientation](#) (Master's Program advising forms)

[Orientation Links](#) (contains links to various RIC webpages, services and other online sources including general information, academic resources, technology resources, social media accounts, MyRIC, and student health & support services).

**Other Available Resources include:**

- [Counseling Services](#) in Brown Hall – phone number 456-8094
- [The Disability Services Center](#) in Fogarty Life Science Room 137; phone number 456-2776
- [The Office of Academic Support and Information Services](#) - in lower level Adams Library - Mall Area; phone number 456-8083
- [The Technology Help Center](#) in Gaige Hall basement; phone number 456-8803
- [The Writing Center](#) - There is a graduate assistant assigned to the Writing Center specifically to work with MSN students. Contact– [rinec-writing@ric.edu](mailto:rinec-writing@ric.edu) – a reply within 48 hours weekdays, 72 hours on weekends.

## AWARDS & SCHOLARSHIPS

### **Caring Award**

The Caring Award is given to one graduate student each year. The award recipient will be selected by the Graduate Committee with nominations solicited from faculty teaching master's courses. A requirement of this award is full or part-time enrollment in the Master of Science in Nursing program. The award recipient will receive an award certificate and a check for \$500.00.

### **Scholarships**

The Program Director regularly sends notification related to scholarship opportunities via the graduate student listserv.

## STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS/COMMITTEES

### **Sigma Theta Tau International - Honor Society of Nursing**

Sigma Theta Tau, Inc., the International Honor Society of Nursing, has established Delta Upsilon Chapter-at-Large with the University of Rhode Island, Rhode Island College, and Salve Regina University. The purposes of Sigma Theta Tau are to: recognize superior achievement and scholarship; recognize the development of leadership qualities; foster high professional standards; encourage creative work; and strengthen commitment to the ideals and purposes of the profession. Qualifications for membership include enrollment in an accredited institution, completion of at least ¼ of the nursing curriculum, and at least a 3.5 grade point average on a 4.0 grade point average system. Students who are notified of their eligibility should complete required application materials by the required due date. Induction takes place in the spring.

### **American Nurses Association of Rhode Island (ANARI)**

Graduate students are encouraged to apply to ANARI for membership. Note: the reduced student rate is for undergraduates only. For more information, go to the website at [www.risna.org](http://www.risna.org).

### **Association of Community Health Nursing Education (ACHNE)**

The Association of Community Health Nursing Educators (ACHNE) provides a meeting ground for those committed to excellence in community and public health nursing education, research, and practice. ACHNE was established in 1978 and is run by elected volunteer leaders who guide the organization in providing networking through the quarterly newsletter and membership directory and providing educational opportunities through publications and the Annual Institute. Students in the Population/Public Health Nursing option are encouraged to join as a student member.

<https://www.achne.org/aws/ACHNE/pt/sp/membership-categories>

### **NP Alliance of Rhode Island (NPARI)**

Students in the NP option are encouraged to join as a student member. The mission of the Nurse Practitioner Alliance of Rhode Island is to promote the profession of nurse practitioners through education of the public, other health professionals and legislators. The intent is to improve the professional and business environments for nurse practitioners and the educational support of NP students. Membership provides information on educational opportunities and scholarships as well as developing professional relationships. <https://npari.enpnetwork.com/>

### **Rhode Island Association of Clinical Nurse Specialists (RI-CNS)**

Students in the CNS program are encouraged to join. Student membership in RI-CNS is free. The mission of RI-CNS is to promote the full scope of practice of the CNS. In addition, RI-CNS promotes the value and increases the visibility of the CNS among healthcare organizations, administrators, healthcare professionals and the public. Membership provides educational, scholarship, networking, and mentorship opportunities. <https://ricns.nursingnetwork.com/>

### **RIC SON Alumni Organization**

The Nursing Alumni Organization was organized in 2001. The organization plans programs and events for alumni, including the Annual Nursing Reunion Breakfast at Homecoming.

### **School of Nursing Committee Participation**

Master's students are invited to participate on committees at the beginning of each academic year. Please contact the SON Graduate Department chairperson for further information.

### **Peer Mentorship**

Newly enrolled students who are interested in being mentored by a currently enrolled student are encouraged to contact the Master's Program Director for further information.

### **Master's Student Events**

A new student orientation is held early in the fall semester for students entering into the MSN programs. Every January, a welcome back reception is held prior to the start of classes, and the Caring Award is also given at this reception. Events are periodically scheduled during the academic year and are announced via the Graduate Nursing student listserve. Contact the Master's Program Director for further information.

## APPENDIX A: FORMS

**RHODE ISLAND COLLEGE - SCHOOL OF NURSING  
EXPOSURE INCIDENT REPORT**

Student's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Faculty Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Agency/Location of Exposure: \_\_\_\_\_

Nursing Course: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**SUMMARY OF EXPOSURE INCIDENT:**

(Describe circumstances of exposure incident and results of immediate follow-up, i.e., blood testing of student/  
source of contact)

**FOLLOW-UP**

The Agency representative has informed the student of the results of the medical evaluation and told them of any medical conditions which may result from exposure to blood or other potentially infectious materials, which require further evaluation or treatment. A copy of this document has been provided to the student.

Agency Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Agency Representative Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*I have been given a copy of the CDC, US Public Health Service Guidelines for the Management of Occupational Exposure to HBV, HCV, and HIV and Recommendations for Post Exposure Prophylaxis (April 25, 2014)  
<https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/PDF/rr/rr5011.pdf>*

**SIGNATURES:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Name (please print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Faculty Name (please print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Faculty Signature

**RHODE ISLAND COLLEGE - SCHOOL OF NURSING  
NON-EXPOSURE INCIDENT REPORT**

Student's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Nursing Course: \_\_\_\_\_ Faculty Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Incident: \_\_\_\_\_ Time of Incident: \_\_\_\_\_ Location of Incident: \_\_\_\_\_

**SUMMARY OF INCIDENT:**

(Describe circumstances of incident, including names of individuals involved.)

**Who was notified regarding the incident?** *(check all that apply)*

- Campus Police     Health Services     Agency Security     Human Resources  
 Other *(please specify)*: \_\_\_\_\_

**FOLLOW-UP/ACTION PLAN**

Was an incident report filed at the site of the incident? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Site Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Site Representative Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*A copy of this document has been provided to the student, Dean, Department Chairperson, and site representative.*

**SIGNATURES:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Name (please print) \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Faculty Name (please print) \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Faculty Signature

A PDF fillable version of this form is available [here](#)

**RHODE ISLAND COLLEGE - SCHOOL OF NURSING  
Graduate Nursing Petition**

The *Handbook for MSN Graduate Students* includes the policies governing students who are enrolled in the School of Nursing MSN Graduate Program. The policies concern issues such as retention, progression, and dismissal. You may wish to refer to these policies when submitting a petition to the Graduate Student and Graduate Outcomes Committee. Please follow the process outlined below:

1. Confer with Faculty Advisor or Program Director.
2. Complete identification and request sections.
3. Obtain faculty Advisor's/Program Director's signature.
4. Submit completed form to the Chair of the Graduate Student and Graduate Outcomes Committee.
5. Chair of Graduate Student and Graduate Outcomes Committee will notify the student and student's advisor of the decision.

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**IDENTIFICATION**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Student ID# \_\_\_\_\_

Name (print): \_\_\_\_\_ Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

RIC email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

I have discussed this petition with the student:

\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature\* of Faculty Advisor &/or Program Director)

\*Signature does not imply approval or disapproval, although the advisor may provide additional information in support or opposition to the petition.



**REQUEST**

(Please type or print clearly)

1. Clearly state the nature of your petition (refer to the policy in the "*Handbook*"):
  
2. Below, please state the reasons for thinking your petition should be granted. What were the extenuating circumstances? Supporting documents should be attached. If you feel these extenuating circumstances are of a confidential nature, you may wish to discuss them with the Chair of the Committee, or a member designated by the Chair. A personal appearance may be requested by the Committee.

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**COMMITTEE DECISION**

Date Received: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Committee Decision: \_\_\_\_\_

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_ Denied: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Chair of Graduate Student and Graduate Outcomes Committee:

A PDF fillable version of this form is available [here](#)

**Rhode Island College  
School of Nursing  
Graduate Department  
Academic Honesty Attestation**

The School of Nursing at Rhode Island College recognizes that the nursing profession is based on a standard of honesty and personal and professional integrity. In order to achieve the mission of the College and the School of Nursing and develop the high ethical standards required for nursing practice, academic honesty is an integral part of the nursing program. Students and faculty are jointly responsible for maintaining an honest environment and all must work together to ensure the success of the academic honesty policy. All students within the School of Nursing are expected to maintain the code of academic honesty. This means that all academic work is presented without plagiarism, cheating, unauthorized assistance or falsifying records.

**The Goals of the Academic Honesty Policy in the School of Nursing are to:**

- Promote a culture of academic honesty within the School of Nursing.
- Increase understanding of acts that are designated as academically dishonest behaviors.
- Maintain the academic reputation of the School of Nursing.
- Clearly define the process related to matters of academic dishonesty.

**As cited in the Graduate Studies Manual, Section VII Academic Integrity:**

In pursuing graduate study, all students are expected to adhere to the accepted standards of scholarly integrity in all presentations, examinations, research and writing of papers and theses/projects. Academic integrity is the foundation of the academic community. Students who violate college rules on academic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure or removal from a course, disciplinary probation, and/or dismissal from the college. Individual schools may have additional standards and policies related to academic honesty.

**According to Manual of Academic Policies and Procedures, Adjudicating Alleged Violations of Academic Integrity**

In the case of graduate students, the faculty member will also inform the director of the graduate program of the nature of the violation and the subsequent action taken by the faculty member, and may recommend that the director of the graduate program take further action.

**Graduate Programs Role.** In the case of graduate students, the director of the graduate program may convey the recommendation of a penalty of probation or dismissal from the program to the academic dean of the school in which the student is enrolled. *(Revised by vote of the Council (May 3, 2013, and approval of the President (May 24, 2013))*

**Academic Integrity Board Role.** The Council of Rhode Island College created the Academic Integrity Board (AIB), composed of students, faculty and administration. The AIB has authority to establish, publish and implement procedures for adjudicating alleged violations of academic

integrity by students. It is authorized to hear and adjudicate charges against individual students in cases of violations of academic integrity.

The Academic Integrity Board shall consider cases referred to it by a faculty member or the Vice President for Academic Affairs, and has the option to recommend any penalties ranging from those available to the faculty member to placing the student on academic probation or expelling the student from the College.

**Appeal.** Any student accused of a violation of academic integrity may appeal action taken by the instructor in a case to the Academic Integrity Board.

Appeals Procedure:

- Appeals or referrals to the Board will follow the standard procedure of the Board.
- The Board shall inform the student, the faculty member, and Vice President for Academic Affairs of its decision

I have read this document and attest to maintaining academic honesty in all academic assignments, clinical documentation and to maintain professional integrity.

Student signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Student printed name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Faculty signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_