

**RN to BSN Degree Completion Program
Student Handbook**

AY 2021-2022



**Health Services
College of Health Professions and Science**

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INTRODUCTION TO THE REGISTERED NURSE TO BACHELORS OF SCIENCE IN NURSING PROGRAM

The 2019-2020 RN-BSN Student Handbook for Montana States University Billings (MSUB) has been reviewed and approved by Assistant Professors. This is a student handbook for the RN to BSN Nursing Program. The present Nursing Program policies in regard to General, Health, and Academic concerns are clearly outlined within this document.

Welcome to the MSU Billings RN to BSN Degree Completion Program!

The purpose of the RN to BSN Student Handbook is to familiarize students with the Nursing Program beliefs, organization, and policies which guide the program of study, activities, and student learning outcomes. The MSU Billings Catalog, MSU Billings Student Handbook, and the State Board of Nursing Rules are other useful documents to review.

The RN to BSN curriculum has been approved by the Montana Board of Regents in September 2016 for the College of Allied Health Professions.

As we experience this decade's transitions in healthcare and education, we are challenged to think, communicate and practice "outside of the box". We are challenged to maintain our values and traditions of the past, while creatively adapting to change. You, the consumers of both healthcare and the education process, will define the direction of healthcare and education in the future. We honor your participation with us as partners in nursing.

Accreditation Status

- Montana State University Billings is accredited by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities, an institutional accrediting body recognized by the Council for Higher Education.
- The Nursing Program is fully approved by the State Board of Regents.
- The RN to baccalaureate degree in nursing program at Montana State University Billings *is accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education* (<http://www.ccnaccreditation.org>).

Please read this handbook carefully. After reading, you will be asked to acknowledge you have read and understand policies of the Nursing Program. You will be accountable to these policies during your nursing program stay. Exceptions to the policies must be submitted in writing and approved by the Program Coordinator.

Program Coordinator, Assistant Professor and Administrative Assistant

Program Coordinator

The Program Coordinator's responsibilities according to the Montana State Board of Regents Statutes state the primary responsibility of the person holding this position will be to provide overall coordination of the RN to BSN Degree Completion Program ensuring quality education for the undergraduate student. This person will be expected to use their skills to assist in recruiting, retaining and contributing to the success of our students, as well as participating in ongoing efforts to improve the quality of our learning-centered environment. This position will be expected to coordinate faculty workloads, develop and deliver upper division nursing courses online, schedule course delivery, advise students and move the Program toward accreditation.

Dr. Becky Anglin, DNP, RN

Program Coordinator/Assistant Professor

Tenure-Track

DNP, 2021 Post University, Waterbury, CT

MSN, 2015 University of Phoenix, Phoenix, AZ

BSN, 2007 Montana State University, Bozeman, MT

Office phone (406) 896-5848; E-mail rebecca.anglin@msubillings.edu

Assistant Professor

The Assistant Professor primary responsibility will be to provide quality education for the undergraduate student. This person will be expected to use their skills to assist in recruiting, retaining and contributing to the success of our students, as well as participating in ongoing efforts to improve the quality of our learning-centered environment. This position will be expected to develop and deliver upper division nursing courses online.

Rebecca Muller RN MS APRN FNP-BC CIC

Tenure Track

FNP, MSU, 2014 Bozeman MT

MS in Nursing Education 2012, University of Wyoming, Laramie WY

BSN 2008, University of Wyoming, Laramie WY

ASN 1989, Sheridan College, Sheridan WY

LPN 1983, Northwest Community College, Powell WY

Office phone (406) 896-5849; E-mail Rebecca.muller1@msubillings.edu

Administrative Assistant

Nursing office personnel are responsible for managing the daily operations of the Nursing Office. They type all program documents, maintain student records, order supplies and coordinate yearly activities. When other support staff or Assistant Professors is unavailable, the Program Assistant serves as a resource for students.

Hannah O'Donnell

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The Nursing Program mission, vision, values, program outcomes, program goals, conceptual framework and student learning outcomes are consistent with those of MSU Billings, the MSUB Mission Statement, and the State Board of Nursing rules and regulations governing nursing practice.

Mission, Visions and Values of MSU Billings

Montana State University (MSU) Billings has a **core purpose** to assure that all members of the university community reach their individual potential.

Mission- Montana State University Billings delivers a transformative education that empowers students from diverse backgrounds to succeed.

Vision- Educating students to impact an evolving global community.

Core Themes

Theme 1: Build educational programs to support student needs.

Theme 2: Progressively grow the university.

Theme 3: Strengthen relationships with the community to enhance partnership opportunities.

Theme 4: Unify, invigorate, and engage MSUB's structure and culture.

Core Values-currently revising as part of its strategic planning process.

Mission, Vision, and Values of the College of Health Professions and Science

Mission- Montana State University Billings' College of Health Professions and Science prepares health professionals and natural scientists to meet the needs of an evolving society through education, discovery, and service.

Vision- Through an environment that promotes experiential learning, students will be transformed into our future health care professionals and scientists.

Values- Build collaborative partnerships among students, faculty, researchers, community members, and industry leaders to improve the physical, emotional, and intellectual health of our communities.

Support every student in meeting their educational goals with informed advising, high quality instruction and innovative curriculum.

Share our expertise through service to our institution, community, and discipline.

Engage in scholarship and research that involves our students in the pursuit of knowledge that will better the health of our communities and explore the wonders of the natural world.

Mission, Vision, Values of the RN to BSN Degree Completion Program

Mission- The mission of the RN to BSN Degree Completion Program is to further prepare nurses as professionals whose practice reflects evidence-based, ethical, and articulate practice in the nursing profession through further education.

Vision- The vision of the RN to BSN Degree Completion Program is to further educate nurses to work in a variety of environments for nursing.

Values- We value collaborative partnerships among nurses, Assistant Professors, community members, and industry leaders for the purpose of nursing care provided.

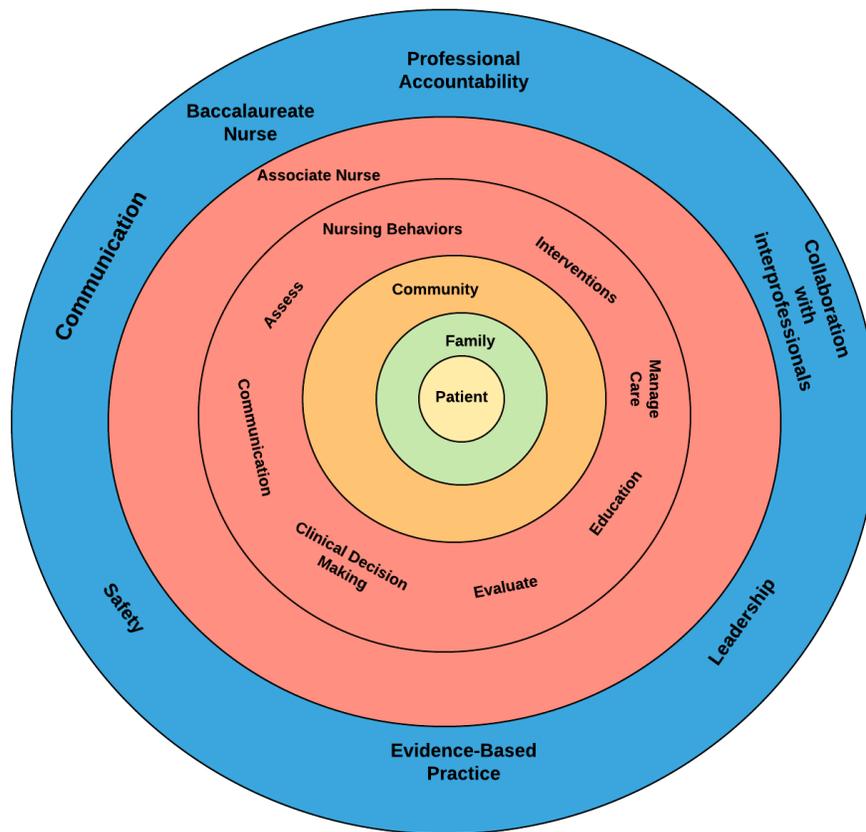
- We hold a high regard to adding knowledge to nurses as part of the educational opportunity.
- We place high value in sharing expertise through student location community service clinical based projects.
- We value a seamless curricular online experience among all nurses.

Conceptual Framework

The MSU Billings RN to BSN conceptual framework is based on the systems theory approach. This approach is supported by six core components which will guide the curriculum expectation and program outcomes for the graduates of this RN to BSN Degree Completion Program.

The baccalaureate core components are:

- Communication
- Leadership
- Safety
- Evidence-Based Practice
- Professional Accountability
- Collaboration with interprofessionals



Program Goals:

1. Eighty-five (85) percent of students who enter the program will successfully complete the program within three years of beginning the program.
2. Recruit and retain qualified faculty.
3. Create an environment of learning that supports the success of students and promotes education and excellence.
4. Eighty-five (85) percent of graduates will report being employed or planning to continue on as students.

Program Outcomes

The RN to BSN Degree completion curriculum offers additional education to prepare the graduates to:

1. Provide holistic nursing care to patients as a whole or family unit within their communities by using effective communication, assessment and collaboration with interprofessionals.
2. Promote patient safety through effective communication and use of information technology by being a leader within the health care system.
3. Utilize current research to promote understanding and application of evidence-based practice and quality improvement in the nursing field.
4. Evaluate vulnerable patient populations utilizing concept maps to manage patient care.
5. Reflect upon professional accountability utilizing nursing ethical standards of practice.

Program Student Learning Outcomes (PSLO):

1. Understand theoretical nursing knowledge and apply advance nursing theory.
2. Participate in quality improvement processes to provide high-quality safe nursing care in our coursework and virtual simulations and collaborate with inter-professionals.
3. Incorporate professional communication and collaborative skills to make evidence-based decisions.
4. Demonstrate ability to provide inclusive care and advocate for patients in a professional manner according to legal and ethical standards to provide relationship centered care.
5. Demonstrate a strong commitment to the nursing profession that embraces the core values of excellence, caring, ethical practice, civility, accountability, and life-long learning.

Overview of the RN-BSN Curriculum

Admission to MSUB does not guarantee acceptance into the RN-BSN Nursing Program.

The Montana Board of Regents of Higher Education approved the RN to BSN degree completion program. The following criteria is required:

- the credential awarded to students who complete the nursing program will be a Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree;
- the nursing program will consist of 49 credits;
- the nursing program will include a common set of MUS core courses, totaling 31 credits;
- the nursing program will include a common set of nursing courses, totaling 33 credits;
- the nursing program will include a common set of other required courses, totaling 13 credits.

The program adopts all major provisions of the Montana University System's common curriculum recently established by the Healthcare Montana consortium

Table 1 shows the plan of study for the Bachelors Science in nursing program.

Table 1

		Course	Credits
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A minimum grade of C+ or better is required in all nursing courses and C- or higher for all non-nursing courses

Fall Semester

Full Semester	STAT 216	Introduction to Statistics	4
1 st 8 weeks	NRSG 325	Advanced Health Assessment	3
1 st 8 weeks	NRSG 322	Health Promotion and Education	3
2 nd 8 weeks	NRSG 320	Nursing Informatics	3
2 nd 8 weeks	WRIT 321	Advanced Technical Writing	3

Spring Semester

Full Semester	NRSG 301	Nursing in the Community	5
Full Semester	NRSG 302	Nursing in the Community-Clinical (45 hours)	1
Full Semester	PSYX 230	Developmental Psychology	3
1 st 8 Weeks	NRSG 424	Nursing Research and Evidence Based Practice	3
1 st 8 Weeks	PHL 326	Dying and Medical Ethics	3
2 nd 8 Weeks	NRSG 326	Complex Healthcare Needs	3

Summer Semester

14 weeks	NRSG 463	Nursing Leadership & Management	5
14 weeks	NRSG 464	Nursing Leadership & Management Clinical (45 hours)	1
1 st 7 Weeks	NRSG 344	Family Nursing	3
1 st 7 Weeks	HUMN	Humanities Elective	3
2 nd 7 Weeks	NRSG 361	Global Nursing	3

If Associate nursing degree is Associate Science of Nursing this plan of study will be followed. If Associate nursing degree is an Associates Art of Nursing then additional science courses may be required

Program Delivery**Online Classroom Activities**

Curriculum for the RN to BSN program will be delivered in an online learning format. Students participate in a variety of learning activities and situations leading to mastery of the student learning outcomes.

Online classroom instruction is directed by each Assistant Professor. Students are expected to participate in online learning activities. This may include but not limited to activities such as reading assignments, written assignments, and virtual simulations.

Clinical

Two of the courses (Nursing Leadership and Management and Nursing in the Community) each have a required one credit hour clinical which equals 45 hours. Each clinical will be in the student's local area. Clinical activities integrate concepts from each didactic (theory) class. Clinical activities are structured to meet program learning outcomes and student learning outcomes of the course. Each Assistant Professor will instruct students about the course requirements for the clinical. Preceptors will be assigned based on the students' location and clinical activity. Preceptor must meet the qualifications set forth within each clinical course. For more information on preceptors, see clinical course Assistant Professor or email the Program Coordinator. It is the student's responsibility to find a clinical location.

Campus

- 1) **Classrooms:** Classroom are all provided through online access of Desire to Learn(D2L).
- 2) **The MSU Billings Library:** The library houses references, texts, and journals for nursing and health-related fields. A TV/VCR monitor, individual study carrels, computer room, group study room, and computer search capabilities are available for student use.

Library Homepage: <http://www.msubillings.edu/library>. Computer capabilities include access to the Internet for CINAHL, Health Reference Center, Medline, and SERHOLD. Documents not available at MSUB can be obtained through Inter Library Loan. Nursing students are expected to utilize the library resources. The library is also a quiet space to study if needed. Access to journals and research information can be done online.

- 3) **Program Information:** Please check D2L frequently for program information. Daily and weekly announcements for nursing classes, financial aid, and job opportunities are posted.

General Policies

The policies discussed on the following pages guide students and Assistant Professors in the daily operations and expectations of the Nursing program. The policies are congruent with those outlined in the MSU Billings Student Handbook and MSUB Catalog. Copies of these documents are available online at www.msubillings.edu.

Student Activities and Nursing Governance Committees

Participation in MSUB Student Activities

Nursing students are encouraged to participate in campus organizations and activities if in Billings, MT. If not living in Billings, MT, students are encouraged to participate in community programs in their local area.

Participation in Nursing Program Team Meetings

The Assistant Professors believes that student participation in department committees enhances the educational program and facilitates the growth and development of themselves as healthcare professionals. Representation on committees provides the structure for this participation. Students may be invited to attend the following:

- Nursing Advisory Board Meetings
- Nursing Program Team Meetings (this includes program management, evaluation, curriculum and strategic planning)

Nursing Advisory Committee

This committee is created for the purpose of working with the Nursing Program efforts to meet community workforce needs and limits its activities to advising on matters that directly concern the Program. The objectives of the committee are as follows:

1. Articulate the purpose and objectives of the Nursing Program to the public and to healthcare agencies.
2. Interpret community healthcare needs and resources to the Nursing Program.
3. Recommend policies and procedures for recruitment and retention,
4. Support high educational standards for the nursing program, Assistant Professors, and students.

5. Recommend curriculum adaptations based on changing competencies, knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary for successful completion of the program.
6. Assist in the identification of resources for educational materials, equipment, and support services for the Nursing Program and students.
7. Assist in long-term program planning based on changes in the healthcare industry, assessment of community needs, and education needs of the nurse clinician.

Membership: Representatives of nursing services, health-related community agencies, community members, Assistant Professors, and student representatives.

Employment

Students are encouraged to consider the time commitment for classes, study, family life, leisure activity and other life responsibilities when scheduling outside employment while attending the Nursing Program. Employment and attending school can be accomplished with careful coordination and time management. Program requirements are the same for all students regardless of choice of outside employment.

Health Policies

The MSUB Nursing Program views health as a state of balance among the four dimensions of the person. As nurses, we must model behaviors which promote, maintain, and restore balance. Our health is inseparable from the health of our community. Therefore, the following health promotion policies are implemented to guard the health and safety of students, families, and patients.

Students must meet college health requirements and safety verifications. To this end, documentation of immunizations and health status (including CPR certification and background) must be on file before the start of the Program. The student is responsible for updating information as needed.

The following immunizations and evaluations are required by the Nursing Program.

Required:

1. **MEASLES AND RUBELLA**
 - if born on or after January 1, 1957 are required to submit proof of adequate documentation of two measles and two rubella vaccinations. Immunization that was administered after December 31, 1957.
 - Requirements include proof of two (2) doses of immunization against measles (Rubeola) and two (2) doses of immunization against Rubella given at least 30 days apart. Include month/day/year.
 - Doses of measles vaccine given prior to 12 months of age or prior to 1968 are not acceptable.
 - A physician, agency, or school official must sign the record.
 - Proof of immunization will be required once the student is accepted into the Program.
2. **CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECK**
 - All students accepted into the RN to BSN Degree Completion Program must complete a background check through Castle Branch.

Disabilities Act

Nursing, as a practice discipline, requires specific cognitive, sensory, affective, and psychomotor abilities. It is the intent of the Nursing Program to:

- assist students to identify core performance requirements necessary for success in the Nursing Program;
- comply with the **Americans with Disabilities Act** which assures every American that “reasonable accommodation” will be made for otherwise qualified individuals with disabilities; and
- ensure client/patient safety in the provision of care

Students should review the following list of core performance expectations that have been identified by the Southern Council on Collegiate Education for Nursing (SCCEN) Task Force on the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. In compliance with the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act, the Nursing Program does not discriminate against

qualified individuals with disabilities. Disability is defined in the Act as a (1) physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of the major life activities of such individuals; (2) a record of such impairment; or (3) being regarded as having such an impairment. For the purposes of nursing program compliance, a “qualified individual with a disability” is one who, with or without reasonable accommodation or modification, meets the essential requirements for participation in the program.

Students who are unable to meet the following Core Performance and Essential Functions of Nursing may not be able to successfully meet classroom objectives. Please note that if a student cannot meet classroom objectives successfully, this is an automatic failure of the course. The student is to contact the DSS office. If the student’s documentation indicates that they meet the definition of the ADA and are considered to be a person with a disability, then the student and the DSS staff, along with Assistant Professors will collaborate to find appropriate accommodations.

Core Performance/Essential Functions of Nursing

(Adapted from SCCEN ADA Task Force Recommendations)

<u>ESSENTIAL FUNCTION</u>	<u>DESCRIPTION</u>	<u>EXAMPLES</u>
Observation	Use of the senses of sight, hearing, smell and touch.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • assess color change in the skin, hear heart, lung, breath sounds, and skin temperature • respond to signals, alarms, and other displays indicating urgent client need, and take immediate action
Communication	Perform activities requiring accurate and efficient interpretation and communication of information nonverbally and in English, both written and spoken.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • respond to a physician order • read and record information • enter data into a client record • direct assistive staff • interact effectively with clients, families, and healthcare team members • understand nonverbal communication • use computer technology
Intellectual/Conceptual	Ability to problem solve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • measure fluids and size • calculate drug dosages, among other calculations • reason, analyze, prioritize, and synthesize data
Behavioral/Social	Perform effectively under stress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • function effectively and professionally under stress • flexible, adapt to changing situations • demonstrate concern for others
Motor	Physical ability, coordination, stamina	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lift, bathe, position, and transport clients • move efficiently enough to meet the needs of several clients in a timely fashion • carry out lifesaving procedures, such as CPR • draw up and give injections • operate equipment and devices such as thermometers, BP cuffs, and IV pumps • efficiently operate equipment in emergency situations • insert and/or maintain client catheters/tubes • capacity to walk and stand 8-12 hours, with minimal breaks
Physical	Prevent spread of infectious diseases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • maintain immunization status

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> maintain standard/universal precautions to prevent contact with airborne and blood borne pathogens,
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Substance (Drugs and Alcohol) Use and Abuse

Substance abuse is a serious and growing problem among healthcare providers. More than 10% of nurses in Montana will have problems with substance abuse at some time during their career. Chemical dependency is an illness that can be successfully treated. The Nursing Program is committed to assisting the impaired student while insuring the safety and well-being of other students and college personnel. Alcohol and chemical abuse/dependency is not considered a protected disability if it interferes with a person’s ability to work or poses a threat to the property or safety of others (Alcohol and Disability Act). The nursing department reserves the right to remove the substance impaired student.

Alcohol or drug abuse can be identified by two or more behaviors indicative of substance abuse. A student who is taking prescriptions or other medication which may interfere with safe nursing care should report use so an appropriate plan of action can be developed. Examples of substance abuse behaviors include, but are not limited to:

- abnormally dilated or constricted pupil
- erratic behavior
- inappropriate appearance or actions
- slurred speech or poor balance
- poor judgment
- alcohol on the breath (old or fresh)

Signs of Abuse Problems

As with any illness, there are signs and symptoms specific to each of the stages:

Early Stage	Middle Stage	Late Stage
Mood Swings	Worsening of moods/explosive outbursts of temper	Job performance is greatly affected, and there are constant complaints from staff about behavior
Gradual social withdrawal	Isolation	Alienation from friends
Occasional intoxication	Defensiveness/Argumentative	Family deterioration
Poor stress tolerance	More episodes of forgetfulness	Divorce or separation
Episodes of forgetfulness	Complaints about other people or family members	Physical deterioration
Defensiveness	Relationship problems with family/friends	Financial Crisis
Irritability	Legal matters such as DUI’s	Suicide attempts
Memory loss	Financial difficulties	Bruises begin to appear
Work performance may not be impacted	Public intoxication, abuse, and blackouts	More legal problems
	Decline of work Performance/complaints from co-workers and patients	

Reference: Montana State Board of Nursing/Nurses Assistance Program brochure

Substance Abuse Policy

A process has been developed to address incidences of student conduct regarding substance abuse. Refer to the MSU Billings Student Handbook for the Code of Student Conduct.

CPR Certification

Students must have current American Heart Association certification in healthcare provider CPR of infants, child and adults or BLS Provider. Written documentation must verify certification dates while attending school. Students are responsible for seeking appropriate certification classes, and are responsible for paying all fees for same.

Dress Policy

The purpose of the dress policy is to maintain acceptable standards of grooming and safety for the student and patient and to project a professional image during the clinical. Appearance is a direct reflection of feelings about oneself and others. Credibility as a healthcare provider is

influenced by appearance and behavior. If in the clinical setting, students represent the Nursing Program, and are assessed, in part, by dress and grooming. The MSUB dress code is similar to the codes of healthcare agencies in Montana.

1. Students must be dressed professionally and/or appropriate for the clinical setting.
2. Proper undergarments shall be worn by all students. This includes bras or undershirts and underwear.
3. No perfume or odorous hair products. Odors may be offensive to patients. Student will be clean and free of body odors.

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is not tolerated within the classroom. It is the responsibility of an individual who feels harassed or threatened to request in a timely manner that the perpetrator of the unwanted behavior stops that behavior. Students who feel they are the victims of sexual harassment should contact their Assistant Professor to problem solve the appropriate course of action. Refer to MSU Billings Student Code of Conduct.

Academic Policies

Admission Process

We promote an appropriate fit to the Nursing Program and the educational goals and outcomes of students through the admission process and the activities leading up to admission.

- Students apply to MSUB.
- Submission of official transcripts from all colleges/universities for evaluation
- Evidence of current unencumbered license as a Registered Nurse (RN) and/or proof of scheduled NCLEX exam date.
- Students meet with an academic advisor in the Nursing Program to develop a plan of study.

Completion of the application does not guarantee admission to nursing classes. The number of students who are admitted to the nursing program is limited. The Nursing Committee reviews and selects candidates.

The Nursing Program reserves the right to deny admission to any applicant based on the best interest of the profession. Failure to disclose previous or pending criminal behaviors may lead to denial of admission or revoked admission. Background check results may preclude a student from course study which will make it impossible for the student to meet the course objectives and he/she will fail the course. Falsification will be considered grounds for dismissal from the Nursing Program.

Transfer Students

Opportunities for transferring nursing credits from previous nursing programs into the current Nursing Program are available depending on space and courses needed. Students completing partial nursing coursework in an approved nursing program other than the current MSUB program must follow the residency transfer requirements of the College. In order for nursing course credits to be considered the courses must be similar in course description. Students must provide course descriptions and syllabi of completed nursing courses to MSUB. Student transcripts will be reviewed for an equivalency evaluation once the student has met the enrollment process requirements. Acceptance of prior course credits is at the discretion of the Program Coordinator/Nursing committee. Acceptance of nursing transfer courses is not guaranteed.

Evaluation of transfer credits also includes the following items:

- Acceptance into the Nursing curriculum through the enrollment process.
- Students must meet the MSUB requirements to receive the academic degree.

Progression and Graduation in the RN-BSN Program

To progress from one semester to the next and to graduate from the nursing program:

1. All required non-nursing courses must be passed with a grade of "C-" or better. Students who receive a grade of "D," "F," or "W" in any course will extend the length of the program.

2. All required nursing must be passed with a grade of “C” or better. Nursing course grades include: classroom theory and clinical. Students who receive a grade of “D,” “F,” or “W” in any nursing course will extend the length of the program. Students must follow the Nursing Program readmission policy outlined below.
3. All nursing courses must be successfully completed within two (2) attempts. If students are unable to complete any nursing course within two (2) attempts this may be grounds for removal from program.
4. The Student Record must demonstrate progressive growth and development in professional behaviors across the curriculum. (Source of documentation: Student Code of Ethics, Academic probation and suspension; student clinical evaluation; and performance improvement plan record).
 - a. Students who do not demonstrate growth in professional behaviors may be placed on Performance Improvement Plan (PIP). See the policy for Problem-Solving Process.
 - b. In situations of a serious and critical nature, students may be removed immediately from the classroom or program related activity and may receive a course grade of “F” or “W” and dismissal from the Program. See the policy for Unsatisfactory/Unsafe Student Conduct and Removal from the Classroom or Clinical setting.

Student Request for Information

Students may have access to their own student files. If students want copies of documents from their files, a written request must be submitted to the Nursing Program Coordinator at least two working days prior to receiving the file information to allow adequate time for office staff to make copies. Students may review their files with office staff or Program Coordinator present; this is subject to Program Coordinator and Assistant Professors availability and generally is not able to be accommodated on a “walk in” basis, but should be scheduled in advance.

Readmission to the Nursing Program

Students who withdraw from nursing classes or fail (grade less than C) a nursing or core curriculum class must request readmission to the nursing program. **Readmission is not guaranteed.** An exit interview with the Program Coordinator is required for any student desiring readmission. Issues discussed in the exit interview may include: problems encountered by the student, the process for readmission, if appropriate, and other pertinent concerns.

Readmission is contingent upon:

- ◆ Space available in the particular semester desired.
- ◆ If an exit interview was completed.
- ◆ Approval for readmission by the Assistant Professors.

In the following situations, students may **not** be readmitted to the Nursing Program:

- ◆ Failure of the same course twice.
- ◆ Failure and a withdrawal from the same nursing course.
- ◆ Violation of the professional code of conduct.
- ◆ Failure to complete exit interview with Program Coordinator at time of departure.

Readmission must take place within one year of failure/withdrawal.

The following process is delineated for students seeking readmission to the nursing program.

1. At the time of failure or withdrawal from the nursing program the student makes an appointment for an exit interview with the Program Coordinator. The exit interview must occur no later than one month before application to the program is due. The Program Coordinator and student will review the reasons for failure/withdrawal. The student is advised of the requirements for readmission, as stated in this policy.
2. The Assistant Professors may make recommendations regarding readmission.
3. After review of the exit interview and Assistant Professors recommendations, the Program Coordinator and Assistant Professors will communicate the decision to the student in writing.
4. Any conditions, coursework, or activities that are required must be completed successfully for readmission. Coursework assists the student to relearn/reinforce knowledge skills and attitudes not attained, retained, or to improve test taking skills. Activities may include tutoring and referrals as deemed appropriate.

Standards for Academic/Professional Quality and Integrity

Confidentiality Agreement

Information obtained by students during nursing activities related to patients, agency personnel, and community/clinical facilities is strictly confidential. This information may only be discussed in nursing class and

conference time for the purpose of learning. Discussion of this information outside of class is unacceptable. Any written papers related to clinical activities shall not identify any patient by name. **A confidentiality contract must be signed by all students prior to beginning the program.** (See Contracts).

Problem-Solving and Performance Improvement Process (PIP) to Improve Unsatisfactory/Unsafe Student Conduct (Academic and/or Professional Behavior)

The philosophy of the Assistant Professors is to collaborate as partners with students to facilitate student learning and program completion. It is the responsibility of students to progress satisfactorily in **academic work** and demonstrate **professional behavior**. Students who have issues with academic work and/or professional behavior will be notified by the appropriate Assistant Professor and given the guidelines and opportunity to improve.

- A Problem-Solving Conference and/or a warning letter is initiated when students experience a pattern of academic difficulty (ex: grades less than “C” on assignments or quizzes) or present a pattern of unprofessional behaviors (ex: poor attendance, disrespect of others, unsafe practice or workflow impact).
- The problem-solving conference is documented in the student’s academic file and the student is given a copy.
- Referrals are made to tutors, or other resource persons, as needed.
- There is an end date on the problem solving conference form for improvement.
- If academic performance and/or professional behaviors do not improve, the instructor will initiate a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP).
- The purpose of the PIP is to clearly delineate the pattern of the student problem, establish measurable improvement goals, develop an action plan for improvement, state the time frame for improvement, and identify logical consequences for achievement or lack of resolution of the problem. A copy of the PIP is placed in the Student Record and a copy is given to the student.
- Students must complete the PIP successfully by the end date given on the form to progress to the next semester or next course of the nursing program. **Students who do not meet the required criteria established in the PIP will be dismissed from the program and/or receive a failing grade in the course, and may not progress to the next semester.**
- If a student advances to another course or the next semester and the issues stated on the initial problem solving form (even if they were resolved in the previous semester/course) reoccur then the issues will advance to the PIP level.

Removal from the Classroom or Clinical Setting

Students may be removed from online classroom settings or Nursing Program activities for unsatisfactory/unsafe student conduct. Assistant Professors may deny student access to course activities for unsatisfactory/unsafe student conduct. Written documentation of the event is recorded in the student file. The nature of the problem determines the action and resolution process, which may include a PIP or dismissal from the nursing program with a grade of “F” or “W.”

Nursing is a high risk/high consequence profession. If a nurse makes an error or demonstrates ineffective communication/interaction skills with those around them, the repercussions can be devastating. Coursework includes learning technical skills needed to do the job, and also behavioral skills needed to effectively interact with patients, families, and coworkers.

The following list is representative, but not all encompassing, of non-professional behaviors which may lead to removal from the online classroom or clinical site, and/or dismissal from the Nursing Program:

1. Verbal or nonverbal communication which threatens the emotional and physical safety of peers, staff, Assistant Professors, or others present in college related activities on campus, in the online classroom, in clinical settings, or at college sponsored events.
2. Behavior that is disorderly, disruptive, or impedes the education process or activities of the college community (work flow impact). This includes, but is not limited to:
 - a. Not participating in the online class
 - b. Not being prepared to participate in class discussion.
3. Unprofessional conduct. This includes, but is not limited to:

- a. Violation of confidentiality
 - b. Disrespect for peers, Assistant Professors, or clinical site staff.
4. Dishonesty. This includes, but is not limited to:
 - a. Plagiarism of papers and classroom work
 - b. Cheating on examinations
 - c. Submitting written material which is untruthful, fraudulent, or unprofessional
 - d. Reporting and/or charting untruthful data in the clinical setting or in a medical record
5. Failure to improve behavior after problem solving counseling. This includes continuing unsatisfactory work/performance or unsafe behavior after receiving a PIP for the problem.
6. Failure to meet educational outcomes at each level of the program.
7. Failure to achieve a grade of “C” or higher in all required coursework.
8. Failure to consistently maintain competencies already demonstrated or learned, or incorporate these competencies into new theory and skills.
9. Violation of Montana statutes or college policy. This includes, but is not limited to:
 - a. Conviction of a felony
 - b. Breach of confidentiality
 - c. Theft or destruction of college or clinical site property
 - d. Being under the influence of chemicals, alcohol, or drugs which impair judgment while on campus, in the clinical setting, or participating in a college related activity
 - e. Use or possession of a deadly weapon while on campus, in the clinical setting, or participating in a college related activity

Students will be evaluated on nursing course participation and professionalism at the Assistant Professor’s discretion.

Attendance Policies for Required Nursing Courses

Upon registering for classes, students contract to attend classes online regularly and adhere to course requirements. This includes consistent participation in course activities.

Rationale

Core values and practice standards guide attendance policies.

- Learning is achieved through individual study and group interaction. Classroom activities guide and focus individual study and provide experiences to apply theory to practice with group interaction.
- The group-learning activities predominant in MSUB nursing courses require regular participation in class. Learning is achieved by group interaction.
- Effective team (group process/conflict resolution) skills are valued by employers. Group-learning activities provide a safe place to learn and practice these skills.
- Respect for our peers, instructional staff, and for the learning process is reflected by being present and on time.
- Accountability is a value in both education and in nursing practice standards. Accountability involves trustworthy, credible, honorable, responsible behavior.
- Employers rate attendance and timeliness as attributes necessary for continued employment. The classroom and clinical setting are the worksite in the learning environment.

Consistent attendance demonstrates respectful, accountable behavior. In analyzing MSUB student’s records, a high positive correlation was found between attendance and academic success.

Student Responsibility in the Event of Absences

Absences should not be a problem as this is an online program but in the instance for a pro-longed absence students should contact the course Assistant Professor for further guidance.

Students are responsible for knowing the content of any classes, orientation, group work, and assignments missed and gather their own course materials.

- See special circumstances/emergency late assignment agreement in Appendix F.

Study Time

According to MSUB policy for lecture classes, one credit hour equals one hour of class per week.

Generally for any college course, it is expected that students spend at least two hours in outside study and preparation for each hour spent in class. Classroom online lecture and discussion are supplemented with reading and audio-visual. In the nursing program, students enrolled in 12 or more credits will spend at least 30-40 hours per week in class or outside study.

Academic Progress/Grading

Letter Grades

One letter grade is awarded for each course based on the criteria found in each syllabus. Grades are based upon coursework completed based on the following grading scale. Grades will not be rounded.

A = 90-100 %	D = 60-69%
B = 80-89 %	F = 59% or below
C = 70-79 %	

Retention guidelines, to insure the success of students in the Nursing Program, include:

- An average of 70% on all coursework must be achieved to pass a required nursing course.
- Students whose grades are influenced by personal issues should meet with the Assistant Professor.

Written Assignments

Grading criteria for individual assignments are distributed on D2L. All formal papers must be turned in on time in APA format. **Students are responsible for keeping a copy of all written assignments.**

Preparation for Clinical

Clinical activities for some objectives may best take place in community based settings, clinics, physician offices or hospitals. Guidelines for clinical activities are reviewed on a semester basis. Students are expected to prepare adequately for the activities. Failure to achieve the objectives of the activity will result in an unsatisfactory grade.

Nursing Orientation

The Nursing Orientation was developed to help offset the initial bewilderment students often feel at the beginning of the academic year. Students are required to attend the online orientation session. Nursing Orientation is a series of modules designed to help students with the transition to online learning. Time management and changing roles are some of the issues addressed, and various activities allow students to meet and interact with Assistant Professors and fellow classmates before the start of classes. Orientation will take place two (2) weeks prior to beginning the nursing program.

Advisement/Advisors

Each student in the nursing program is assigned an advisor at the start of the first semester. The same advisor is retained for the remainder of the program unless a change is requested by the student or instructor. The student and advisor meet face to face or online at least once during each semester to plan enrollment in courses for the next semester. The advisor helps the student through the process of course selection and graduation. Course approval by the advisor is mandatory to ensure the completion of all curriculum requirements for graduation in a timely manner.

Students are encouraged to make appointments with the advisor at the earliest indication of an academic problem. If a personal problem or circumstance influences academic progress, the advisor may refer students to other college support service, or community resources at the advisor's discretion.

MSUB Support Services

MSUB Student Services provides the following services for students.

- academic advising
- classes on academic skills, test taking, job-seeking skills, personal growth and problems
- free tutors and counselors
- career services including workshops, career counseling and testing, Job Locator, credential file service, career

- resource library, campus interviewing, and career/job fairs
- financial aid resources

Student Responsibilities

Guidelines for Student Conduct

Nurses are healthcare professionals who follow a **code of ethics** established by the American Nurses Association (See Appendix B). The Montana Nurse Practice Act, the statute regulating the practice of nursing, defines the rules governing the professional conduct of nurses (See Appendix C for excerpt). The MSU Billings Student Handbook also recognizes the need for meaningful standards. Please refer to the Student Handbook to guide student behavior. Nursing students are expected to uphold these codes as a member of the MSU Billings learning community. The ANA Standards of Nursing Practice (See Appendix C) also guide conduct and practice.

Complete policies governing academic and judicial policies are outlined in the MSU Billings Student Handbook and MSU Billings MSUB Catalog. Those policies specific to the Nursing Program are discussed below.

Due Process

Student problems related to rules, policies, Assistant Professors/staff conduct and waivers should be resolved using campus resources in the following order:

1. Instructor
2. Your advisor
3. Program Coordinator- Becky Anglin
4. Dean – Dr. Diane Duin

The student may bring one advocate of their choosing or the ASMSU Billings Student Resolution officer at any time throughout the above process. Refer to MSU Billings Student Handbook for student complaint procedures.

Grievance Procedure and Grade Appeal Procedure

The RN to BSN program fully embraces due process for formal complaints. We encourage students who feel s/he may have been treated unfairly to request a review of the circumstance through a formal complaint. Formal complaints follow the MSUB guidelines.

When a student has a concern about the action of a particular individual or department, the complaint initially should be directed to the person(s) responsible for the individual or department as noted in the University organizational structure. Certain expeditious procedures to redress specific complaints are outlined on the following pages. The MSUB complaint guidelines can be reviewed here: <http://www.msubillings.edu/VCSA/PDF/Studenthandbook.pdf>

The program defines a formal complaint as a student perceived wrongful treatment and unfair grading. This process is fully defined in the student handbook and explained to students during the online orientation. All appeals will be kept on file by the Program Coordinator. If a student has a complaint that is not nursing course specific it will follow the MSUB complaint guidelines. We encourage students and clinical sites, who may have a specific nursing course complaint of the following procedure:

1. Appeals must be done in writing
2. Appeal must be received by the Program Coordinator for any nursing course grade to be reviewed
3. The written intent for appeal must be received within one business day of being informed of the grade posted or infraction

APPENDICES

Appendix A

Guidelines for Progressive Student Counseling To Improve Performance/Behavior*

*adapted from a Padgett Thompson workshop

Purpose:

- Facilitate student achievement/success in a nursing course and program.
- Maintain safety of the student, patient, peers, and others.
- Maintain nursing and college policies.
- Give the student direction and opportunity for improvement.

Situations necessitating progressive counseling include but are not limited to:

- An unresolved problem solving conference issue.
- A number of situations/incidents call for student counseling. An incident may breach one or more of the following (refer to Nursing Student Handbook):
 - Policy and procedure violation: example: safety risk, absences, substance abuse, cheating, hygiene, etc.
 - Performance: failure to achieve clinical objectives or improve performance (recall that marginal or needs improvement on clinical evaluations does not denote achievement of objectives), does not follow explicit instructions.
 - Behavior/conduct: physical/verbal abuse, failure to notify instructor of error, etc.
 - Work flow impact: “a negative effect on organization’s ability to achieve its goals”; affects quality of process and production of outcomes; student behavior which negatively influences others; example: slam door, break confidentiality, does not participate in group problem-solving or blocks problem-solving, prevents cohesiveness, nonverbal: making faces, repeated loud sighing, shaking in anger, etc.
- Insubordination: failure to follow policies or directions.

Directions to complete the PIP form

1. Overview of the incident
 - a. Describe the incident(s) which may include:
 - 1) policy and procedure violation
 - 2) performance
 - 3) behavior/conduct
 - 4) work flow impact
 - b. Give date of the occurrence and counseling which took place.
 - c. Summarize previous occurrences and counseling process.
2. Establish measurable improvement goals
 - a. Related to the policy violation, performance, behavior, work flow impact; example: present and on time each day, safe medication administration, appropriate communication with peers, staff, and instructor, assignments complete and on time, etc.
3. Indicate needed training and direction
Examples:
 - Absences: give clear direction with absentee policy, referral to mentor/counselor for problem-solving.
 - Return to practice in college lab with preceptor for skills or communications practice.
 - Increase productivity to organize care for two patients: for two days instructor will assist student in prioritizing care, next two days student must demonstrate independence in prioritizing and implementing care plan in timely manner.
 - Return to the practice lab to look over the care plan format and familiarize student with the paperwork expectations.
4. Indicate reasonable time frame for improvement
 - Time frame is dependent on situation: immediately, one week, three weeks, etc.
 - Indicate feedback period: may be daily, weekly, etc. dependent on situation.

- Indicate “review points” time frame and documentation: interim evaluation period.
 - If improves for the review point time period: establish extension period for continued performance, ex: end of semester, (can’t be forever!)
5. Establish positive and negative consequences
- Delineate consequences if student achieves outcomes: ie: passes course, continues in the program.
 - Delineate consequences if student does not achieve outcomes: i.e. Fails the course, removal from the program, etc.
 - Student has choice of “conscious decision-making” in resolving the problems.
6. Student input/acknowledgment
- Student signs and dates indicating agreement or disagreement.
 - Student writes comments of disagreement as to incident, observations, corrective action, time frame, consequences.
 - If student refuses to sign or make comments, document student refusal; and if possible, have a witness sign noting the refusal. The witness must be an employee (instructor/mentor) who maintains confidentiality.
7. Documentation of the PIP
- A copy of the Performance Improvement Plan is given to the student.
 - The original is placed in the student file.
 - A written notice of completion of the PIP is written by the Assistant Professors and placed in student file.
 - A copy is given to the student.
8. If students do not complete the described behavior or academic changes by the deadline on the PIP then student may be dismissed from nursing program.

Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) Notice

Student:

Directions: Complete the form using additional paper if necessary. Give a copy of the Performance Improvement Plan to the student. Place the original in the student's file.

1. Overview of the Incident(s) and Date (include Problem Solving Conferencedate):

2. Evaluation of how behavior impacts nursing program policies.

3. Performance improvement goals:

4. Needed training and direction

5. Time frame for improvement

6. Consequences

7. Student input/acknowledgment

I have read and understand this Performance Improvement Plan Notice.

I agree to the terms of this plan. I disagree with this notice/plan.

Student Comments:

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

Assistant Professors/Staff Signature: _____ Date _____

Appendix B

American Nurses Association Code for Nurses

The American Nurses Association Code of Ethics for Nurses can be located online at the following web site-
<http://nursingworld.org/>

Montana State Board of Nursing Statutes and Rules

The Montana State Board of Nursing information can be located at the following web site. A hard copy of the Nursing Statutes, Rules, and Declaratory Rulings is also located in the Program Coordinator's office for reference.

www.nurse.mt.gov

Appendix C

Special Circumstance/Emergency Late Assignment Agreement

Date _____

I (student) _____ have permission from my instructor
_____ to turn in the following assignment
_____ late due to unavoidable circumstances. This
assignment will be turned in on _____. If I am unable to complete this
assignment by the agreed upon extended due date, this agreement will be reviewed by myself
and my instructor. Late assignments may be subject to point(s) penalties.

Student: _____

Instructor: _____

Date assignment turned in to instructor: _____

Consents/Agreements

Please complete all 4 consents/agreements listed on pages 27-28

Scan and email to <mailto:rebecca.anglin@msubillings.edu>

Or

Fax to Becky Anglin (406)657-2254

These must be received before the 2nd week of school.

**MSUB
Nursing Program**

CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

Students in the Nursing Program may be working with patients and patient medical records in various types of healthcare facilities and in the classroom.

Student use of medical records and confidential patient information in the educational process requires:

1. All information about a patient, written or verbal is strictly confidential. Any violation of confidential information about a patient is punishable in a court of law. Refer to the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996.
2. The professional Code of Ethics of the American Nurses Association stipulates that confidentiality of patient information is a part of professional responsibility and integrity.

Because of these legal and ethical considerations, any student enrolled in the Nursing Program who reveals contents of a medical record or information related to a patient's private personal status is subject to reprimand and possible immediate dismissal from the Nursing Program.

Further information is contained in the MSUB RN to BSN Student Handbook.

Having understood the above, I _____ do hereby agree to maintain confidentiality of all patient information to which I am exposed as a MSUB Nursing student.

Date _____ Student _____

This agreement will remain on file in the student file and may be distributed to supervisors at all practicum sites to which students have been assigned.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITY STATEMENT

I, _____ have read the MSUB RN to BSN Student Handbook containing general information and policies applicable to all nursing courses while I am enrolled in the Nursing Program.

These policies were reviewed with me. I agree to abide by these policies while enrolled in the nursing program.

Student Signature

Date

I, _____ understand that the expenses for enrollment in the Nursing Program. While MSUB assists students in obtaining financial aid, I am fully responsible for payment of tuition, fees, related education obligations and living expenses.

Student Signature

Date

This form will become part of the student's Nursing program permanent record.

CONSENT FORM FOR RELEASE OF INFORMATION

In signing this document, I give my consent to the Nursing Program to use the results of my tests, journals, and any student work to be included in group data for educational research, grant and accreditation, and other publications. My name and any identifying information will not be used.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

PHOTOGRAPHIC RELEASE FORM

I hereby give permission to MSUB to use my photograph or video representation in any and all media for the purpose of information dissemination or publicity related to MSUB.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

This form will become part of the student's Nursing program permanent record.