



OKLAHOMA
PANHANDLE STATE
UNIVERSITY

RN to BSN Student Handbook

Updated Spring 2023

Welcome to the RN to BSN Program at Oklahoma Panhandle State University (OPSU). We are pleased that you have chosen our nursing program for your educational goals. Our program was founded in 1996 and was one of the first nursing programs in the nation offering nursing courses online.

The information in this handbook will serve as a guide to policies, standards, and expectations of the RN to BSN Program.

The RN to BSN Program follows OPSU's Student Code of Conduct. Policies that differ from those of the university are addressed in the RN to BSN Handbook. The Student Code of Conduct is available on the OPSU website.

All policies and statements contained in this handbook are subject to continuous review and evaluation. The Nursing Department reserves the right to make changes at any time. Changes to the handbook will be communicated to students through the use of multiple methods according to the nature of the change. Communication methods include email, website updates, and/or course announcements.

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Section I: Overview

Accreditation

The RN to BSN Program at Oklahoma Panhandle State University is accredited by the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing, ACEN (<http://www.acenursing.org/>).



Oklahoma Panhandle State University is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission (hlcommission.org), a regional accreditation agency recognized by the U.S. Department of Education.

Disclaimers

This RN to BSN Handbook is neither a contract nor an offer to make a contract. While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information enclosed, the Handbook is updated only once each year prior to the start of the fall term. OPSU and the Nursing Department reserves the right to make changes at any time with respect to course offerings, degree requirements, services, policies, or any other subject addressed in this document. Any changes in information are widely communicated to students in the program. The information enclosed is provided solely for the convenience of the reader, and OPSU expressly disclaims any liabilities that may otherwise be incurred.

This version of the Handbook supersedes all previous versions. Students are accountable for familiarizing themselves with its contents and for compliance with the policies and procedures contained herein.

Title IX

It is the policy of both Title IX and Oklahoma Panhandle State University to prohibit discrimination because of age, race, ethnicity, color, sex, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, veterans' status or disability for equal employment and educational opportunities without merit.

Please direct all Title IX questions or complaints to:

Glass, Amber

Title: Dean of Student Services / Title IX Coordinator / International Student Coordinator

Phone: 580.349.1359

Email: amber.glass@opsu.edu

OPSU Mission

Rooted in "Progress through Knowledge," OPSU is committed to promoting excellence in the preparation of students for success in a global community.

OPSU Vision

Oklahoma Panhandle State University, a national leader among regional universities, will empower its learners and community through the cultivation of lifelong opportunities.

OPSU Values

- *Integrity:* We are held accountable to maintain ethical practices.
- *Inclusion:* We embrace and support our diverse cultures.
- *Excellence:* We seek continuous improvement opportunities.
- *Service:* We operate as a center for educational and cultural opportunities.
- *Sustainability:* We are stewards in the conservation of our resources.

RN to BSN Program Mission

The mission of the RN to BSN Program is to support educational mobility and broaden previous education by focusing on the importance of professionalism, rural nursing, community health, and leadership.

RN to BSN Program Goals

- *Professionalism:* Provide post-licensure education access to those with previous nursing education;
- *Rural Nursing:* Emphasize rural healthcare needs as a means to increase awareness and improve understanding of the unique care and skills required of nurses practicing in rural areas;
- *Community Health:* Prepare graduates with additional nursing competencies to provide professional care in a variety of health care settings;
- *Leadership:* Provide an environment which fosters an awareness of diverse perspectives of culture, caring, health, healing, and illness.

Essentials of Baccalaureate Education for Professional Nursing Practice

- Essential I: Liberal Education for Baccalaureate Generalist Nursing Practice
 - A solid base in liberal education provides the cornerstone for the practice and education of nurses.
- Essential II: Basic Organizational and Systems Leadership for Quality Care and Patient Safety
 - Knowledge and skills in leadership, quality improvement, and patient safety are necessary to provide high quality health care.
- Essential III: Scholarship for Evidence Based Practice
 - Professional nursing practice is grounded in the translation of current evidence into one's practice.
- Essential IV: Information Management and Application of Patient Care Technology
 - Knowledge and skills in information management and patient care technology are critical in the delivery of quality patient care.

- Essential V: Health Care Policy, Finance, and Regulatory Environments
 - Healthcare policies, including financial and regulatory, directly and indirectly influence the nature and functioning of the healthcare system and thereby are important considerations in professional nursing practice.
- Essential VI: Interprofessional Communication and Collaboration for Improving Patient Health Outcomes
 - Communication and collaboration among healthcare professionals are critical to delivering high quality and safe patient care.
- Essential VII: Clinical Prevention and Population Health
 - Health promotion and disease prevention at the individual and population level are necessary to improve population health and are important components of baccalaureate generalist nursing practice.
- Essential VIII: Professionalism and Professional Values
 - Professionalism and the inherent values of altruism, autonomy, human dignity, integrity, and social justice are fundamental to the discipline of nursing.
- Essential IX: Baccalaureate Generalist Nursing Practice
 - The baccalaureate graduate nurse is prepared to practice with patients, including individuals, families, groups, communities, and populations across the lifespan and across the continuum of healthcare environments.
 - The baccalaureate graduate understands and respects the variations of care, the increased complexity, and the increased use of healthcare resources inherent in caring for patients.

RN to BSN End-of-Program Student Learning Outcomes

1. Evaluate the use of information from nursing, scientific, and humanistic disciplines as a generalist nurse to address healthcare needs across the lifespan in diversified health care settings. (BSN Essential 1, 9)
2. Illustrate the use of critical thinking and technology for decision-making considering individual differences, ethnic identity, and cultural values. (BSN Essential 7, 4)
3. Analyze the importance of communication and collaboration with other health care professionals and members of the general public in promoting health across the lifespan. (BSN Essential 6)
4. Select current evidence for application to nursing practice. (BSN Essential 3)
5. Integrate professional values of nursing by applying nursing knowledge within a variety of health care settings. (BSN Essential 8)
6. Justify the use of professionalism and leadership to impact patient outcomes and quality improvement within the healthcare system. (BSN Essential 2, 5)

SECTION II: Getting Started

Time and Commitment

The RN to BSN Program is an online program of study. The program requires a significant commitment of time devoted to study and online engagement. As a general guideline, students should plan to spend three (3) hours of preparation for each hour of credit (example: a 3 credit hour course is equivalent 9 hours of involvement/week; a compressed 8 week course = 18 hours/week).

Computer Literacy & Requirements

This program exclusively uses the online environment in this educational experience; therefore, it is important for students to utilize appropriate computer applications and software to be successful. It is necessary for each RN to BSN student to have essential knowledge needed to function independently with a computer. This includes the ability to:

- Utilize Microsoft Office software (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, etc.) and/or compatible programs. *Microsoft Office software is available for free download through the myOPSU portal.*
- Send and receive email (*OPSU email is the official method required for communication between faculty, advisors, and students*)
- Ability to learn and navigate online courses using the Learning Management System
- Create presentations with or without narration (example: PowerPoint, Prezi, etc.)
- Manage documents and files
- Utilize software and application to participate as needed with asynchronous online webinars, meetings, and video conferencing

IT support is available through the OPSU website. An [IT Help Request Form](#) is used to communicate questions and requests. This form is available on the OPSU website through the Resources tab located at the bottom of the homepage.

Online Learning Management System

OPSU uses a Learning Management System (LMS) to host online courses. Access to the LMS, Aggie Scholars, is available through the myOPSU portal. Appropriate training and support services are available through Aggie Scholars.

SECTION III: RN to BSN Program Information

Overview

The RN to BSN Program is designed to enhance professional knowledge and skills for registered nurses. The curriculum builds on the knowledge and skills of the associate or diploma prepared registered nurse. All nursing courses are offered online with practicum experiences arranged in the student's geographical area. The program is built to support:

- further undergraduate study

- educational mobility
- professionalism
- rural nursing
- community health
- leadership and management

Curriculum

Students admitted to the RN to BSN Program are required to complete eight nursing courses. Additionally, students must complete the general education coursework required by the institution. General education courses are typically taken prior to nursing courses depending upon individual student needs.

General education courses are required for every undergraduate student. The following general education is prescribed for all candidates for degrees granted by Panhandle State and approved by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education.

General Education | 41 credit hours

Communication | 9 credit hours

- ENGL 1113 Freshman English I
- ENGL 1213 Freshman English II
- Communication Elective

Mathematics | 3 credit hours

- MATH 1513 College Algebra (or MATH 1523 Modeling and Basic Statistics or MATH 1473 Quantitative Reasoning)

Natural Science | 8 credit hours (4 hours each of a biological science and physical science)

- BIOL 1304 Principles of Biology (or other equivalent biology course that includes a lab component)
- CHEM 1135 General Chemistry I (or other equivalent physical science course that includes a lab component)

U.S. History and Government | 6 credit hours

- HIST 1313 U.S. History 1492-1877 (or HIST 1323 U.S. History 1877- Present)
- POLS 1013 American Government

Social Science | 6 credit hours

- Economics course
- PSYC 1113 General Psychology (or choose from geography, history, political science, sociology, psychology, or criminal justice)

Humanities | 6 credit hours

- Choose from humanities, music appreciation, music history, art appreciation, literature, introduction to theater, philosophy, world history, upper level foreign language, AND/OR world religion. (Must include courses from two areas. No activity courses will count).

Liberal Arts | 1 credit hour

- Choose from the courses identified in the course description portion of the catalog.

Grading Scale

The RN to BSN Program uses the grading scale as listed below. Additional information is available in the general catalog. *A grade of "C" or better is required for upper level nursing courses.*

- A = 90-100
- B = 80-89
- C = 70-79
- D = 60-69
- F = Below 60

RN to BSN Required Nursing Courses

Nursing courses do not have to be taken in sequential order, other than NURS 3113 being completed in the first term and NURS 4343 being completed in the final term. Although a certain order of completion is recommended, students may take courses out of order with approval by the program director and/or advisor.

Required Course	Credit Hours	Course Description
NURS 3113	3	The Science of Nursing examines the philosophical and theoretical bases underlying concepts and operations inherent to nursing. The evolution and current state of theory in nursing will be examined. Multiple theorists will be studied, including Jean Watson and the Theory of Human Caring and other caring theories.
NURS 3213	3	Pharmacotherapeutics examines the principles of therapeutic pharmacology for restoration and support of the psychological, physiological and chemical disturbance in human function. Focus on drugs in the processes, and guidelines for nursing intervention indicated by these effects.
NURS 3214	4	Health Assessment and Health Promotion emphasizes the development and use of critical skills necessary to holistically assess, evaluate and document the health status of clients throughout their life span. Health promotion and maintenance, education, and caring are components of this process.
NURS 3333	3	Nursing in Rural America examines rural culture and factors that impact the health of rural residents. The focus is on characteristics and perspectives of rural residents, barriers to healthcare services, role and scope of rural nursing practice, and health promotion for rural population (individuals, families and communities). The current state of rural nursing theory is addressed.
NURS 3344	4	Evidence-Based Practice in Nursing examines the study of the foundations of scientific investigation in nursing. Emphasis is on evidence-based practice in nursing including research methodologies and processes and critical appraisal of the nursing and/or health care literature.
NURS 4225	5	Community Health Nursing emphasizes caring concepts and interventions in the delivery of health care to community populations across the lifespan. Throughout the course, students will collaborate with community health-care professionals and resource providers. Community health-focused activities,

		family assessment activities and community-centered projects allow students to integrate knowledge, theory, and evidence based practice relevant to community nursing. This course includes a practicum component.
NURS 4335	5	Nursing Leadership focuses on synthesis of leadership and management skills and organizational behaviors relevant to professional nursing practice. Throughout the course, students will collaborate with healthcare leaders/managers while participating in leadership activities and projects. This course includes a practicum component.
NURS 4343	3	Professional Practice Seminar requires the registered nurse to synthesize knowledge acquired in the RN to BSN curriculum toward the development of the professional nursing role. Integrated content expectations are evolving issues, lifelong learning, impact of cultural/ethical/legal issues, and promotion of the nursing profession.

Sample Plan of Study

Courses are offered in 8-week sessions, including the summer. Students may attend the program full-time or part-time. A sample full-time degree plan that includes core nursing courses only is shown below. Students who need general education courses may work with their assigned advisor to have these built into the degree plan.

RN to BSN Program | FT Degree Plan

*This degree plan has been individualized for **Sally Student** as of 01/04/2023*

Spring 2023 | 13 credit hours

1st 8 weeks

NURS 3113 Science of Nursing
NURS 3344 Nursing Research

2nd 8 weeks

NURS 3214 Health Assessment and Health Promotion
NURS 3212 Pharmacotherapeutics

Summer 2023 | 17 credit hours

1st 8 weeks

NURS 4225 Community Health Nursing
NURS 3333 Nursing in Rural America

2nd 8 weeks

NURS 4335 Nursing Leadership
NURS 4343 Professional Practice Seminar

Student Representation

In the spirit of shared governance, students have input into the nursing program through volunteer participation in departmental faculty meetings. Students are provided with meeting details and log-in information at least two weeks before the scheduled date.

Graduation and Commencement

Information and requirements related to graduation is available on the OPSU webpage for Commencement and Graduation.

Students are required to complete a Graduation Application and Evaluation. Communication of this requirement is sent to students via email and course announcements.

RN to BSN students are highly encouraged to participate in the commencement ceremony at program completion. Information regarding commencement activities will be communicated via email and course announcements.

SECTION IV: Support Services

RN to BSN students have access to the same support services available as on-campus students.

Advisement and Enrollment

RN to BSN students are assigned an academic advisor. The advisor will assist with course planning and identification of resources needed for academic progression including instructions on how to apply to graduate for your final semester of enrollment.

RN to BSN students are provided an initial degree plan. This plan should be followed when registering each term (fall, spring, and summer). Changes to the degree plan need to be communicated in collaboration with your assigned advisor. Following advisement each term, students will complete self-enrollment through OPSU's Self-Service Banner system for the next term.

Bookstore/Textbooks

Students are expected and required to have required course materials on the first day of class. 8-week classes move quickly; books will be used from the first day of class.

Textbooks are available from the OPSU Bookstore, publisher's website, and third party vendors. OPSU does not endorse specific vendors or publishers. To order books from the OPSU Bookstore, please follow the instructions and guidance on the OPSU Bookstore webpage.

Student E-Mail

All students are assigned an OPSU email account and are responsible for all information sent via the university email. University email is the official channel for communication with instructors and OPSU personnel. Students are required to check their OPSU email account frequently for new information. If there is a problem accessing your student email account, please contact the Director of Institutional Research at 1.580.349.1549 or dillon.schoenhals@opsu.edu.

Academic Resource Center

The Academic Resource (ARC) Center is available to all students enrolled at OPSU and provides testing services, counseling services, academic coaching services, and individualized tutoring. In addition, the ARC collaborates with other campus offices and faculty to support the development of knowledge and personal growth for our students. The ARC also is responsible for information pertaining to disability accommodations. The *Disability Accommodation Policy* is available through the OPSU website

Contact the ARC staff through the telephone (580) 349-1504.

Financial Aid Services and Scholarships

Financial Aid Services can be contacted on the OPSU webpage. Assistance for completing the requirements to access available financial aid of all varieties (grants, federal and state aid, etc.) is available through this office. Online students can readily access the OPSU Financial Aid counselors to seek avenues for funding support.

University and foundation scholarships are available to RN to BSN students. Information can be found on the Scholarship Information and Opportunities webpage.

TUTOR.COM™

OPSU offers students free access to Tutor.com™. This service is a fully online tutoring service. Students can access a tutor in many subjects including Math, Science, Social Studies, English, Foreign Languages

and Business. Students may access Tutor.com through online courses under the “Resources” tab on the navigational bar.

Additional support for writing success is also available through Tutor.com™. Students may upload papers for an evaluation specific to the course assignment, grammar, formatting, etc. RN to BSN students are highly encouraged to take advantage of this service. There is no cost to students.

Marvin E. McKee Library

Library services and materials are available both online and on-campus through the Marvin E. McKee Library.

- As an online student, you can access OPSU’s databases and interlibrary loan using your campus email and password.
- Online courses include a direct link to the Marvin E. McKee Library under the “Resources” tab on the navigational bar.
- Contact with Library staff is available through the library webpage, telephone (580)349-1540, or email mckeelib@opsu.edu.

Registrar and Admissions

The OPSU Registrar's Office can be contacted at <http://www.opsu.edu/Offices/Admissions/>. The Registrar manages student transcripts and other official documents from admission through graduation. This office also supports students with academic appeals, grade and tuition refund requests, and more.

SECTION V: Policies

Admission Requirements

Applications to the nursing program are accepted prior to each semester and the summer session. The following is required to be considered for admission to the RN to BSN Program:

- Application and admittance to OPSU;
- Completed RN to BSN Program application;
- Official transcripts from all colleges, universities, or nursing schools attended*;
- A minimum cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA) of 2.0 on a 4.0 scale;
- Grades below “C” in nursing coursework are not transferable;
- Current, active, unrestricted licensure as a registered nurse (RN) in the state in which the applicant is practicing**;
- Graduate with a Diploma or Associate Degree in Nursing from an accredited nursing program (i.e. ACEN, CCNE).

Nursing students currently enrolled in state-approved Associate Degree nursing programs who have successfully completed at least three semesters of nursing coursework may take specified RN to BSN nursing courses (NURS 3113, NURS 3213, and NURS 3333).

*The RN to BSN Program can only accept general education credits from regionally accredited institutions.

**RN licensure must remain current, active, and unrestricted throughout the duration of the program of study.

Attendance Policy

Students are expected to participate in online courses regularly, as directed by course faculty. Some faculty require specific attendance and can monitor student activity in the online class. Regardless of the attendance policy, students are always responsible for the learning activities for each module in online courses. Refer to individual course syllabi for specifics.

Practicum Requirements

For practicum courses (NURS 4225 and NURS 4335), the setting will be arranged by the student and approved by faculty. Practicum requirements are specified in the respective course syllabi and must be met.

Students in a practicum setting not only represent themselves as professionals, but they are also a reflection of the OPSU BSN Program. While some agencies may have specific requirements that the student must follow, the BSN Program expects, at a minimum, for the student to conduct themselves professionally at all times, follow the dress code of the facility, and wear identifying OPSU name badge. Name badges are provided, on a one-time basis, to RN to BSN students prior to the practicum courses. If the name badge is lost or damaged, the student is responsible for replacement and should contact Student Affairs (http://www.opsu.edu/Offices/Student_Affairs/).

Student Conduct Policies

Oklahoma Panhandle State University (OPSU) is committed to creating and maintaining a productive living and learning community that fosters the intellectual, personal, cultural and ethical development of its students. Self-discipline and valuing the rights of others are essential to the educational process and to good citizenship. Attending Oklahoma Panhandle State University is a privilege and students are expected to meet or exceed the University's standards of conduct both on and off campus. The Code of Conduct is available through this link: http://www.opsu.edu/dwn/PLC_Student_Code_of_Conduct.pdf

Academic Integrity Agreement

An institution's reputation and intellectual freedom depend on its uncompromising commitment to the ideal of academic integrity. OPSU is committed to instilling and upholding integrity as a core value. OPSU is dedicated to maintaining an honest academic environment and ensuring fair resolution of alleged violations of academic integrity.

Academic integrity is required in every aspect of a student's association with OPSU. Students will respect OPSU's commitment to academic integrity and uphold the values of honesty and responsibility that preserve our academic community. OPSU's Academic Integrity Policy is available on the website.

Critical Incident Policy

A critical incident is described as a breach of any associated policy of a nursing course, of the program, college, or of professional nursing standards as outlined in the ANA's Code of Ethics and/or Scope and Standards of Practice, nurse practice acts, and more. Examples of critical incidents, in part, would be unprofessional or unethical behavior, unsafe practice, breaches in confidentiality (HIPAA), incivility, lack of integrity, cheating, intentional plagiarism, etc. An occurrence of a critical incident is a significant concern and documentation enables faculty to support re-direction of at-risk behaviors. A critical incident would be documented by faculty in the student's file. The documentation of the critical incident, including a plan of action, would be reviewed and signed by the student.

Note that any combination of two critical incidents may result in program dismissal.

Degree and Retention Requirements

- There is no minor in nursing.
- Students must complete program requirements within five years of admission.
- Nursing courses do not have to be taken in sequential order, other than the required first and last courses. Although a certain order of completion is recommended, students may take courses out of order with approval by the program director and/or advisor.
- Students must maintain current, active, unrestricted licensure as a registered nurse (RN) for the duration of nursing program.
- A grade of "C" or better is required in all nursing courses.
- There are a total of 120 semester hours in the program.
- At least 30 semester hours must be completed at OPSU with at least 15 of the last 30 hours completed in residence. Online courses are considered admissible in fulfilling the residency requirement.
- The statewide articulation agreement grants 30 hours of upper level nursing hours for the AAS in Nursing or Diploma in Nursing and RN licensure. These apply toward fulfilling the requirement of 40 hours of upper division credits and 60 hours from a baccalaureate degree granting institution.
- All RN to BSN students complete the eight required RN to BSN courses (30 semester hours).
- In addition, OPSU requires a total of 41 general education credit hours, three credit hours of an undergraduate level statistics course, and 16 additional hours of electives for a baccalaureate degree. These 60 credit hours can be transfer credits from other accredited institutions.
- Students may choose to enroll on either a full time or part time basis.

Nonfulfillment of Retention Requirements (grade D, F, W)

RN to BSN students who are unsuccessful in any one nursing course (grade D, F, W) may repeat the nursing course. If the student has continued or excessive unsuccessful course attempts, the student is subject to possible dismissal from the program.

RN to BSN students are required to maintain licensure as a registered nurse (RN) throughout the program after formal acceptance into the program. Students who no longer have active licensure as an RN may not continue in the program and are subject to dismissal.

Grievance Policy

The RN to BSN Program is committed to the promotion of quality education in an environment of civility, fairness, and integrity that is free from discrimination. To honor that commitment, students are encouraged to seek resolution of any concerns, problems, or grievances that they may encounter during the course of their education.

The nursing program defines a formal complaint as a concern, grievance and/or complaint in which an individual feels that he/she has not received treatment consistent with University policy and/or has concerns about students, faculty, staff, or the department as a whole. A complaint becomes formal after it cannot be resolved informally. The RN to BSN Program follows the same process for grievances as the university. The grievance process should occur in the following order:

Informal Process

- The student will first discuss the problem with the person(s) directly involved to seek resolution of the problem (for instance, another student, a preceptor).
- If the matter remains unresolved, the student discusses the problem with the faculty member.
- If the matter remains unresolved, the student contacts the Director of the RN to BSN Program. The student provides as much detail about the concern as possible. The student indicates a potential resolution. This communication must be presented via written format accompanied with the student's signature and date. (Note: The Director will keep a record of all complaints for documentation and program quality improvement purposes.)

Formal Process

- If the matter still remains unresolved despite advancing the matter through the informal process ranks, the student will file a formal complaint.
- In filing a formal concern, students are referred to the OPSU Office of Student Affairs.
- Undergraduate grade appeals are addressed in the OPSU general catalog.
- The OPSU policy regarding student discrimination grievances can be found at this link: https://www.opsu.edu/Offices/Student_Affairs/Student-Complaints/