



**Alvernia University
John & Karen Arnold
School of Nursing**

**RN to BSN Completion Program
Student Handbook**

2026-2027

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INTRODUCTION

The RN to BSN Completion Program Student Handbook is designed to supplement the Alvernia University Catalog and Alvernia University Student Handbook. It has been prepared to assist the RN student and faculty in standardizing policies within the Nursing Department.

The policies contain essential requirements in the preparation of the professional nurse both academically and clinically in accord with the mission of Alvernia University, the outcomes of the Nursing Program, the requirements of the Pennsylvania State Board of Nursing, and the outcomes proposed by professional nursing standards.

All students must acknowledge by answering the questions on Canvas, that they have thoroughly read, understand, and will follow the policies and student obligations as outlined in this handbook. Should a student not acknowledge the policies in the handbook, the student is still held responsible for following all policies and guidelines.

Changes in policy may result from requests from Clinical agencies and other stakeholders. Students will be notified via Canvas of any policy changes.

Enrollment in the John and Karen Arnold School of Nursing is conditional upon compliance with the policies of this Handbook. Nothing in this Handbook creates or is intended to create a promise or representation of continued enrollment, and that the policies and procedures contained herein may be changed by Alvernia University at any time. Record of the student's signature will be archived in Canvas

Students are also required to read and follow the policies outlined in the "Alvernia University Student Handbook" and the "Alvernia University Course Catalogue"

[University Student Handbook](#)

[Alvernia University Course Catalog](#)

Purpose, Organization, Administration

MISSION STATEMENT

The John and Karen Arnold School of Nursing is designed to function within the overall educational framework and in accord with the Mission Statement of Alvernia University. The programs provide students with an education in the Catholic intellectual tradition, combining liberal arts, professional education, and ethical values. Learning takes place within a caring Franciscan environment, emphasizing respect for the dignity of all human beings and the call to serve others. Christian values are blended with professional competence to provide the student with knowledge and skills to serve in health care settings with diverse populations. Faculty and students work together to increase understanding of each other and clients with different cultural backgrounds and perspectives. Graduates are prepared to be reflective practitioners with high moral integrity, engaged in lifelong learning.

NURSING PROGRAM OUTCOMES

- Prepare learners for evidence-based, clinically competent professional practice that serves diverse populations within a rapidly changing healthcare practice and delivery system.
- Develop professional nurses who contribute to the discipline through practice, research, education, and leadership.
- Serve regional communities by educating nurses at the general and/or graduate levels.
- Demonstrate Catholic Franciscan values through community leadership and service opportunities.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) Program is to offer a dimension of learning for the student in a Christian-oriented environment. The RN to BSN Completion Program is designed for Registered Nurses or new graduates anticipating taking the NCLEX-RN who are graduates of a diploma or associate degree program. The primary goal of the RN to BSN Completion Program is to prepare graduates to integrate values, skills, knowledge, and ethical standards of the nursing profession into their nursing practice. The graduates will develop and enhance their expertise to deliver health care to individuals across the lifespan, families, and community groups in a wide range of health care environments with sensitivity to cultural and environmental factors. The RN student is recognized as an adult learner who brings professional skills and personal goals to the educational setting.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES: RN TO BSN COMPLETION PROGRAM

- Demonstrate a solid base in liberal education – humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences – to inform generalist nursing practice.
- Assume an ethical leadership role to improve quality and safety of clients' care within a variety of health care settings.
- Integrate reliable evidence to inform practice and make clinical judgments.
- Demonstrate skills in information technology and client care technologies to facilitate ethical and safe care.
- Recognize local, state, national, and global trends in health policy and regulation and its effect on nursing practice.
- Use professional communication and collaboration skills to deliver safe and evidence-based, client-centered care.
- Use evidence-based disease prevention and health promotion practices across the life span.
- Demonstrate the professional standards of moral, ethical, and legal conduct.
- Synthesize core knowledge and skills for generalist nursing practice across the life span in a variety of health care settings.

PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES

The Bachelor of Science Degree in Nursing (BSN) Program utilizes *Scope and Standards of Nursing Practice* (ANA, 2021); *The Essentials of Baccalaureate Education for Professional Nursing Practice* (AACN, 2008, 2021); *Pennsylvania Nurse Practice Act [Professional & Vocational Standards (Title 49, Chapter 21), Pennsylvania Code* (July 4, 2015)]; and the *American Nurses Association Code of Ethics* (ANA, 2015).

ACCREDITATION STATUS

The Bachelors of Science Nursing Program at Alvernia University is accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE) www.ccneaccreditation.org.

STATEMENT OF MISSION AND VALUES IN ACADEMIC LIFE

The John and Karen School of Nursing supports the Alvernia University Statement of Mission and Values in Academic Life. This is in conjunction with the professional nursing standards of conduct.

- Franciscan higher education provides a value system seeking integration of all academic disciplines and a curriculum that acknowledges these values as a transforming force in the light of the Gospel.
- Those who acknowledge this value system also recognize that we are to be “in relationship” with all our brothers and sisters in respectful, loving, and compassionate concern for each other.

Therefore, we:

- Support peace and non-violence by respecting diversity and affirming the dignity of everyone in our university community.
- Practice civility, respect, and courtesy in our daily conversation and behaviors.

In light of the issues raised and understanding that the solution lies primarily in our living according to the Franciscan values we support, the Alvernia University faculty should continue to explore creative opportunities for integrating our core values and the mission statement into academic life, thereby recognizing moral development across the curriculum as a priority at the University.

<https://www.alvernia.edu/about/franciscan-tradition>

RN TO BSN CODE OF ACADEMIC AND PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

The RN to BSN Completion Program adopts the American Nurses Association (ANA) Code of Ethics and the Pennsylvania State Board Professional Conduct Standards as a guide for professional nurse behavior. These standards are based on an understanding that to practice nursing as an RN student is an agreement to uphold the trust with which society has placed in us. The statements of the Code and Standards provide guidance for the RN student in the personal development of an ethical foundation. They are not limited strictly to the academic or clinical environment but can assist in the holistic development of the person.

ANA CODE OF ETHICS

A code of ethics makes explicit the primary goals and values of the profession. When individuals become nurses, they make a moral commitment to uphold the values and special moral obligation expressed in their code. The Code for Nurses (ANA, 2015) is based on a belief about the nature of individuals, nursing, health, and society. The development of a code of ethics is an essential activity of a profession and provides one means for the exercise of professional self-regulation.

- The nurse practices with compassion and respect for the inherent dignity, worth, and unique attributes of every person.
- The nurse's primary commitment is to the patient, whether an individual, family, group, community, or population.
- The nurse promotes, advocates for, and protects the rights, health, and safety of the patient.
- The nurse has authority, accountability, and responsibility for nursing practice; makes decisions; and takes action consistent with the obligation to promote health and to provide optimal care.
- The nurse owes the same duties to self as to others, including the responsibility to promote health and safety, preserve wholeness of character and integrity, maintain competence, and continue personal and professional growth.
- The nurse, through individual and collective effort, establishes, maintains, and improves the ethical environment of the work setting and conditions of employment that are conducive to safe, quality health care.
- The nurse, in all roles and settings, advances the profession through research and scholarly inquiry, professional standards development, and the generation of both nursing and health policy.
- The nurse collaborates with other health professionals and the public to protect human rights, promote health diplomacy, and reduce health disparities.

- The profession of nursing collectively through its professional organizations must articulate nursing values, maintain the integrity of the profession, and integrate principles of social justice into the nursing and health policy.

American Nurses Association. (2015). *American Nurses Association code of ethics for nurses with interpretive statements*. Silver Spring, MD: Author.

STANDARDS OF NURSING CONDUCT

A Registered Nurse shall:

- Undertake a specific practice only if the RN has the necessary knowledge, preparation, experience, and competency to properly execute the practice.
- Respect and consider, while providing nursing care, the individual's right to freedom from psychological and physical abuse.
- Act to safeguard the patient from the incompetent, abusive, or illegal practice of any individual.
- Safeguard the patient's dignity, the right to privacy, and the confidentiality of patient information. The standard does not prohibit or affect reporting responsibilities under 23 Pa.C.S. Chapter 63, the Older Adults Protective Services Act, and other statutes which may mandate reporting of this information.
- Document and maintain accurate records.

A Registered Nurse may not:

- Knowingly aid, abet, or assist another person to violate or circumvent a law or Board regulation.
- Discriminate, while providing nursing services, on the basis of age, marital status, sex, sexual preference, race, religion, diagnosis, socioeconomic status, or disability.
- Knowingly permit another individual to use his license or temporary permit for any purpose or knowingly permit the unlicensed person under the RN's jurisdiction or supervision to misrepresent that the individual is a licensed nurse.
- Misappropriate equipment, materials, property, drugs, or money from an employer or patient.
- Solicit, borrow or misappropriate money, materials or property from a patient or the patient's family.
- Leave a nursing assignment prior to the proper reporting and notification.
- Knowingly abandon a patient in need of nursing care.
- Falsify or knowingly make incorrect entries into the patient's record or other related documents.
- Engage in conduct defined as sexual impropriety in the course of a professional relationship.

Pennsylvania Nurse Practice Act [Professional & Vocational Standards (Title 49, Chapter 21), Pennsylvania Code (July 4, 2015)].

NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

It is the policy of the John and Karen Arnold School of Nursing to follow through with the Alvernia University Non-discrimination Policy in the admission process, classroom, and clinical practice settings. Please refer to the Alvernia University Catalog.

We are committed to equality. All persons have equal opportunity to be enrolled and progress in the School of Nursing provided that they meet Core Performance Standards as outlined in this handbook; discriminatory and harassment practices are strictly prohibited.

Classroom and clinical placement opportunities are designed to be similar to meet the program objectives and profession standards. Students have equal opportunity to experience all planned clinical rotations.

Policies included in the Alvernia University Catalog, Alvernia University Student Handbook and the John and Karen Arnold School of Nursing Student Handbook are consistently followed for all students. [Alvernia University Policies | Alvernia University](#) .

SIGMA THETA TAU INTERNATIONAL NURSING HONOR SOCIETY UPSILON ZETA CHAPTER (#460)

On April 17, 2007 the Nursing Honor Society at Alvernia College was chartered as an official chapter of Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society of Nursing ("Sigma"). Designated the Upsilon Zeta Chapter, Sigma is an organization which provides opportunities and responsibilities to make definite contributions to the Alvernia University Nursing Department, to the profession, and to the health of the public worldwide. Its purposes are to recognize superior achievement, recognize the development of leadership qualities, foster high professional standards, encourage creative work, and strengthen commitment to the ideals and purposes of the profession.

The precursor of Upsilon Zeta was the Alvernia College Nursing Honor Society, chartered on November 14, 2003. Approval for the Upsilon Zeta Chapter was granted at the Sigma International Biennial Convention in the fall of 2006. Membership in the honor society is by invitation only. The criteria for membership for undergraduate students is based on having completed at least half of the nursing curriculum, having achieved a cumulative grade point average of at least 3.0 on a 4.0 grading scale, and ranking in the top 35% of their class. Nurse leaders must hold a baccalaureate degree and have demonstrated achievement in nursing education, practice, research, administration, or publication.

At Alvernia University, 93 nurse leaders and senior level baccalaureate nursing students were inducted as Charter Members into the Upsilon Zeta chapter. Each candidate is required to meet the criteria for academic integrity. Academic integrity is defined as a "commitment, even in the face of adversity, to five fundamental values: 1) trust, 2) honesty, 3) fairness, 4) respect, and 5) responsibility." At the Chartering Ceremony, Sister Mary Stella Cisz received the Chapter's first "Friend of Nursing" award and was recognized as one of the principle founders of Alvernia's nursing program in 1977.

The Honor Society of Nursing, Sigma Theta Tau International, is a not-for-profit organization whose mission is to improve the health of people worldwide through leadership and scholarship in practice, education, and research. Founded in 1922, the honor society currently has over 100,000 active members in more than 100 countries. Members include practicing nurses, instructors, researchers, policymakers, entrepreneurs, and others. Sigma's vision is to create a global community of nurses who lead using scholarship, knowledge, and technology to improve the health of the world's people.

For additional information on Sigma, contact <https://www.sigmanursing.org>

Curriculum

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The Conceptual Framework for the John and Karen Arnold School of Nursing at Alvernia University focuses on the care of the client, which may be the individual, family, group, or the community. Eight essential concepts surround this central core. Each concept interrelates to the others as they circle the core, which impact and are impacted by the client or receiver/s of nursing care.

The outer ring of the model represents the continuously revolving process which is the system by which professional nursing care is accomplished. Each step in the nursing process connects by the vital link of communication. The entire system of nursing care operates in continual awareness of the core, the client, through the actualization of one or more of the essential concepts. The broken line represents the fluid movement between process, concepts, and the focus of nursing care.

The conceptual framework, built upon a firm foundation of the liberal arts, the sciences, and the humanities, operates within a caring teaching-learning environment. It illustrates the means to providing holistic nursing care across practice environments.

The eight essential concepts integral to the Alvernia John and Karen Arnold School of Nursing are:

Professional Role

- Nurses are providers of care, designers, managers, and coordinators of care, and members of an ever-evolving, multi-faceted practice profession (AACN, 2008).

Ethics

- Ethical and legal principles define nursing practice and provide guidelines for responsible, effective, and compassionate care of individuals, families, groups, and communities. The John and Karen Arnold School of Nursing at Alvernia follow the tenets of the Code of Ethics for Nurses (ANA, 2015).

Evidence Based Practice

- Nurses consciously and judiciously integrate the current best evidence with clinical expertise and patient/family preferences and values for delivery of optimal nursing care. Evidence Based Practice is a mark of excellence among professional nurses and healthcare organizations.

Diversity

- Learning about and demonstrating respect for diversity and cultural awareness enhances the delivery of health care that is holistic, and client centered. The promotion of cultural competence and respect for diversity are hallmarks of the John and Karen Arnold School of Nursing at Alvernia.

Leadership

- Leadership is the informed and wise use of power and the ability to influence others effectively in order to accomplish a goal. The potential for capable and ethical leadership distinguishes Alvernia's nursing students.

Skill

- The ability to do something well, according to standards of professional nursing practice, is usually gained through education or experience. Skill refers to both tasks performed, and care provided by a nurse, as well as to critical thinking and problem-solving ability within healthcare settings. Such activities of providing service to others in a competent, safe manner are essential to the promotion, maintenance, and restoration of health and well-being or in prevention of illness.

Technology

- The systematic application or use of scientific knowledge, devices, machines, tools, and techniques to solve practical problems which affect those seeking and using healthcare is an expectation of professional nurses in the 21st century. The use of various technologies and software applications is woven throughout the John and Karen Arnold School of Nursing at Alvernia.

Safety

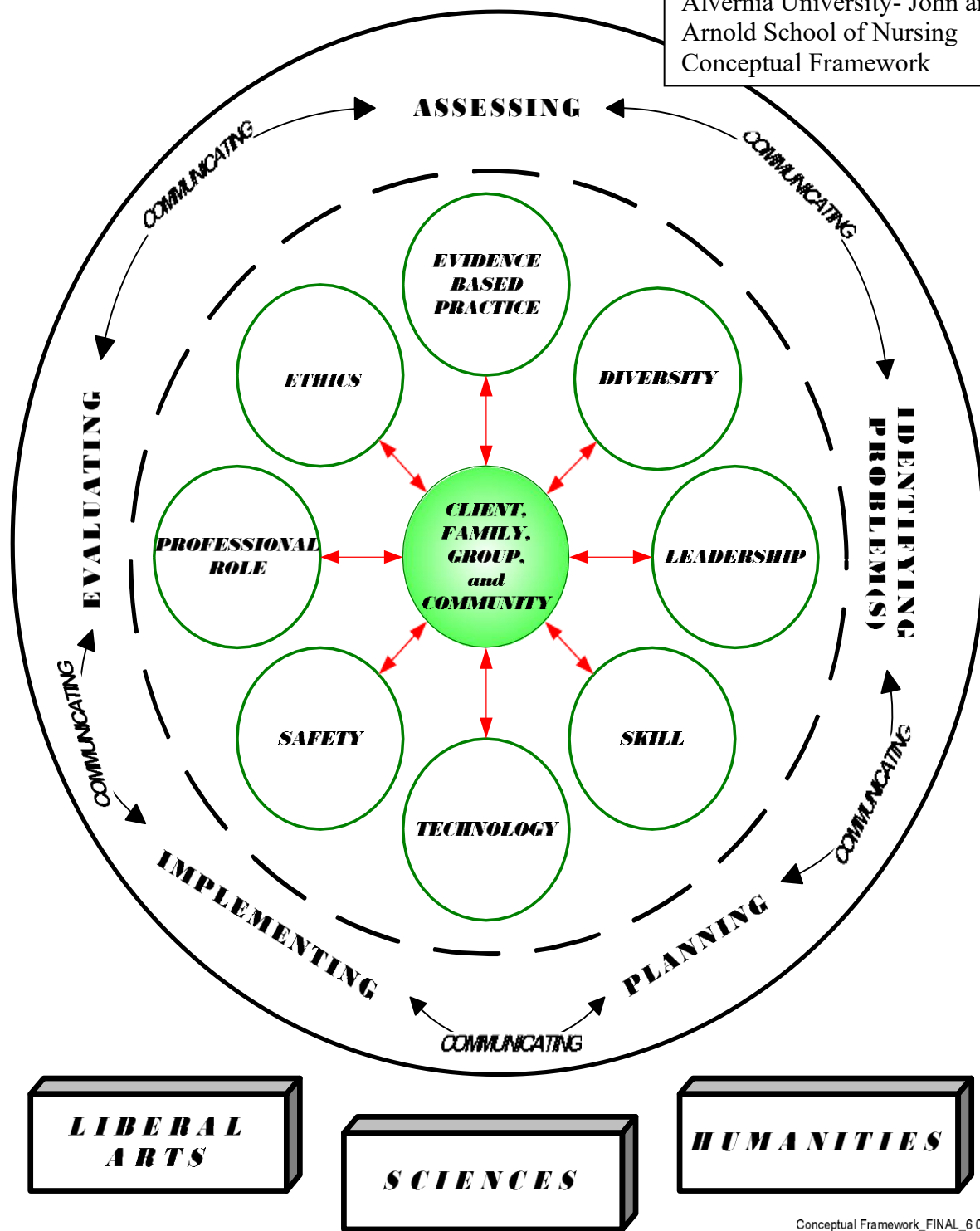
- Within the healthcare environment, safety refers to freedom from whatever exposes one to danger or from liability to cause danger, harm, injury, or loss. Safety is taught and modeled at every level of the John and Karen Arnold School of Nursing and is considered a standard of all nursing practice and care.

References:

American Nurses Association. (2015). Code of ethics for nurses and Interpretive statements. Retrieved from:

http://nursingworld.org/ethics/code/protected_nwcoe813.htm

American Association of Colleges of Nursing. (2008 and 2021). The essentials of baccalaureate education for professional nursing practice. Author.



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PROGRAM OF STUDY

The Bachelor of Science in Nursing Completion Program is available for the diploma or associate degree prepared Registered Nurse who wishes to earn a baccalaureate degree.

Courses are predominantly designed to be taken non-sequential. However, it is strongly recommended that students take 300 before 400 level nursing courses because generally 400 level courses build on knowledge and skills obtained in 300 level courses. Students typically plan to take the two courses that include a practice component (NUR 403 and 405) back-to-back in spring and summer semesters. NUR 411 and 419 are designed as culminating courses in the RN to BSN Completion Program.

A total of 120 credits of nursing and liberal arts/sciences are required for each graduate.

Maximum of 90 transfer credits allowed.

Lower-Level Requirements (ADN or Diploma)

67-70 credits

- Composition and Research
- Physical and Biological Sciences
- Social Sciences
- Nursing Courses

Upper-Level Core Requirements

24 credits

- | | |
|--|-------------|
| • Communication | 3 credits |
| • Literature | 3 credits |
| • Art/Music/Theatre | 3 credits |
| • History or Social Science (possibility met in lower level) | 3 credits |
| • Mathematics (Statistics required) | 3-4 credits |
| • Philosophy | 3 credits |
| • Philosophy/Theology | 3 credits |
| • Medical Moral Theology | 3 credits |

Upper Level Nursing Courses

28 credits	
NUR 303 Preparation for Professional Writing*	1 credit
NUR 318 Developing Cultural Competency and Global Awareness*	3 credits
NUR 320 Introduction to Healthcare Informatics*	3 credits
NUR 403 Health Restoration in the Aging Population+	6 credits
NUR 405 Health Promotion in Families and Communities+	6 credits
NUR 411 Nursing Leadership and Management*	3 credits
NUR 419 Research Methods for Professional Nurses+	3 credits
NUR 321 Current Issues and Trends in Nursing Practice* (elective)	3 credits
NUR 330 History and Trends in Nursing* (elective)	3 credits
* MOD schedule	
+ Semester long	

- A minimum of 28 credits at the 300/400 level
- If from a dual enrollment program (RHSBS and JFMSO), those students must complete 25 credits at the 300/400 level. In addition, these students are only required to complete the core nursing classes, totaling 25 credits. (This excludes the NUR 321 and the Nursing elective course).

UNSUCCESSFUL NCLEX EXAMINATION POLICY

It is the policy of the Alvernia University, John and Karen Arnold School of Nursing RN to BSN Completion Program to require RN Licensure for participation in the upper division courses that include a practice component (NUR 403 and NUR 405).

PROGRAM EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT OF OUTCOMES

The RN to BSN Completion Program evaluation processes are folded into current University-wide and School of Nursing evaluation practices. The Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE) Accreditation Standards ensures comprehensive, ongoing evaluation from every level of the curriculum and internal/external consumers.

The purposes of the School of Nursing's program evaluation are to 1) systematically assess curriculum, instruction, student outcomes; 2) identify areas of challenge and opportunities for improvement, and 3) facilitate program improvement. The processes of collecting, analyzing, and providing data for reports to State agencies, accrediting agencies, and governing bodies are key to program evaluation.

Multiple data sources from students, faculty, and employers are used to assess student learning and evaluate the RN to BSN Completion Program.

Guidelines and Policies

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Students are admitted to Alvernia University and are fully accepted in the RN to BSN Completion Program when the following documentation is submitted:

- RN to BSN Completion Program application
- Official transcripts for all previous nursing school and college courses, accredited programs only. An official transcript of all previous work is required whether a student has earned transfer credits or not, or whether a student wants transfer credits.
- Photocopy of a current Registered Nurse License from the United States or its territories

Students may be admitted to the RN to BSN Completion program prior to passing the NCLEX; however, students are not permitted to progress and register for the two practice component courses (NUR 403 and 405) without a current and valid RN license from the United States or its territories.

ACADEMIC PROGRESSION POLICIES

- A minimum of 28 credits at the 300/400 level
- If from a dual enrollment program (RHSHS and JFMSON), those students must complete 25 credits at the 300/400 level. In addition, these students are only required to complete the core nursing classes, totaling 25 credits. (This excludes the NUR 321 and the Nursing elective course).
- A grade of C+ or better in all nursing courses is required to progress in the RN to BSN Completion Program
- Maintain a cumulative GPA of 2.5.
- Policy allows for one course repetition and a maximum of one course failure throughout the duration of the program. Repeating a course may be due to an unsatisfactory grade, or withdrawal from a course.
- Medical withdraws will be on a case by case basis.

NURSING STUDENT HEALTH POLICY

It is the policy of the Alvernia University John and Karen Arnold School of Nursing RN to BSN Completion Program to comply with university and healthcare facility/community agency health policies.

Each Student is Responsible For:

- Personal health insurance coverage.
- Documentation of immunizations as required by the university or healthcare facilities and community agencies.
- Maintenance of good health promotion practices and utilization of preventive care in common illnesses.

In addition to health & wellness policy requirements, background clearances (FBI, Pennsylvania State Police, and Child Abuse) are required for the practice component courses NUR 403 and NUR 405. Further information is provided within these courses.

Students will be required to obtain the appropriate clearances PRIOR to starting NUR 403 and NUR 405.

Students will receive information to open a Complio account to upload appropriate documents the student may already have from employment or other activities.

Students who do not have the appropriate requirements by the third week of the class in NUR 403, NUR 405 will be dropped from the class, and need to retake the class when it is offered again.

FORMAL COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

A formal complaint is defined as a written expression of serious dissatisfaction related to any aspect of Alvernia University John and Karen Arnold School of Nursing. A formal complaint is distinguished from a dispute about a grade in a course or other course evaluation matter, which is handled under the Alvernia academic grievance procedures and harassment complaints, which are handled in accordance with the Alvernia University Harassment policy. See [Student Handbook](#)

APPEALING COURSE AND/OR ASSIGNMENT GRADES

Appealing a Course Grade

Students wishing to appeal a course grade must follow the appeal process outlined by the university, using the Academic Grade Appeal Policy and Procedure [Student Handbook](#)

The Grade appeal process is for students who feel they were graded unfairly, differently from other students or not according to the course syllabus. A grade appeal is not appropriate if a student does not like their course grade.

Appealing an Assignment Grade

Students who wish to appeal an assignment grade should follow the Chain of Command. 1st- Faculty Member, 2nd Chief Nursing Officer, 3rd Dean of Health Sciences. Students should make every attempt to resolve an assignment grade issue at the instructor level.

STATEMENT ON THE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Students are reminded that the standards for professionalism are the same online as in any other circumstance. Based on the current evidence, the following “best practices” for Social Media use outlined in the [Student Handbook](#) are suggested

References:

American Nurses Association. (2011). *ANA's principles for social networking and the nurse*. <https://www.nursingworld.org/globalassets/docs/ana/ethics/social-networking.pdf>

National Council of State Boards of Nursing. (2024). A nurse's guide to the use of social media. <https://www.ncsbn.org/brochures-and-posters/nurses-guide-to-the-use-of-socialmedia>

PROFESSIONAL DECORUM

RN to BSN Completion Program students are expected to adhere to professional attire and behavioral standards which reflect a professional level of responsibility. The nursing student is a representative of the nursing profession and the Alvernia University's John and Karen Arnold School of Nursing. As such, the maintenance of a professional appearance and demeanor is expected for students in all courses, within the School of Nursing, and at university related activities. This includes but is not limited to: campus observations of class, simulation, or clinical activities; participation in practica as part of coursework to meet program requirements; and RN to BSN Program/course activities and conferences outside of the Alvernia University campus. Students should also act as role models for students and health care professionals.

Students should dress in a professional manner. Jeans/shorts/capris, sweatpants and shirts, sandals, and casual accessories are not considered appropriate in settings as described above. Lab coats should be worn at all clinical sites, as appropriate. The program identification/name tag **MUST** be worn at clinical or practicum sites.

The John and Karen Arnold School of Nursing follows the University policies for the following:

ADA Accommodations

Chemical Impairment Concerns

Harassment Policy

[Alvernia University Policies | Alvernia University](#)